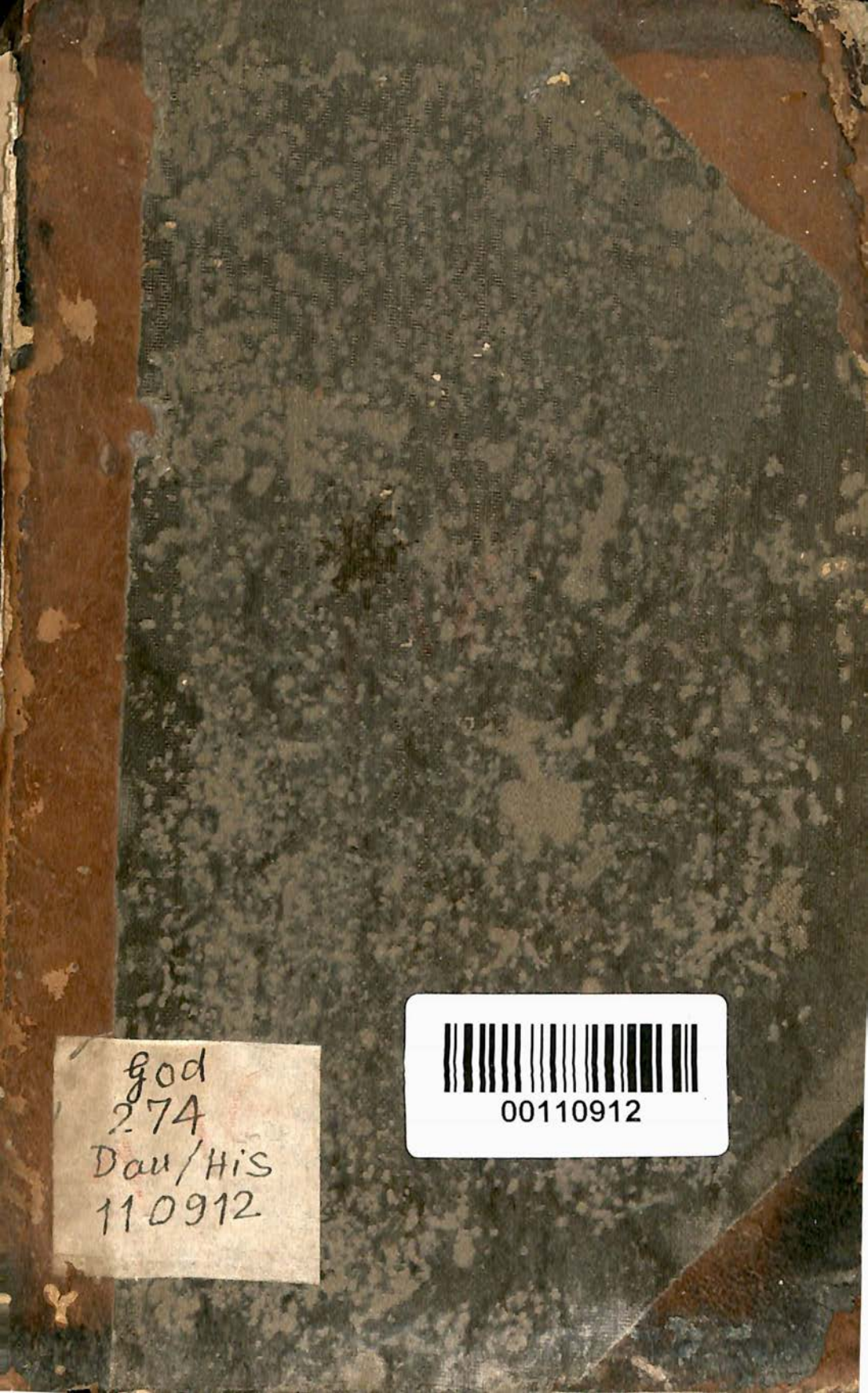

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HISTORY

OF THE

GREAT REFORMATION

OF THE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

IN

GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, &c.

110912

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PREFACE.

AT a period when increased attention is everywhere drawn to those original documents which form the basis of Modern History, I gladly add my mite to the general stock.

In the former portion of this work, my attention was not confined to the historians of the time, but I judged it right to compare the testimony of the witnesses, letters, and earliest accounts; and had recourse to the authority of manuscripts, particularly one by Bullinger, which has since been printed.

But the necessity for recourse to unpublished documents became more urgent when I approached the Reformation in France. The printed materials for a history of the Reformed opinions in that country are few and scanty, owing to the state of continued tri[illegible] which the Reformed congregations have exis[illegible]

I [illegible] examined the various [illegible] it will be seen that a [illegible] Royal Library, and [illegible]lted, throws much [illegible] Reformation. [illegible]lted t[illegible]

for the use of a manuscript life of Farel, written by Choupard, in which most of these documents are introduced. These materials have enabled me to reconstruct an entire phase of the Reformation in France. In addition to the above helps, and those supplied by the Library of Geneva, an appeal, inserted by me in the columns of the *Archives du Christianisme*, led to other communications from private individuals, to whom I here return my grateful acknowledgments,—and especially to M. Ladevese, pastor at Meaux.

It may be thought that I have treated at too much detail the early progress of the Reformed opinions in France: but those particulars are in truth very little known. The entire period occupying my Twelfth Book has but four pages allotted to it by Beza; and other historians have done little more than record the political progress of the nation.

Many causes have combined to postpone the appearance of the present vol[illegible] has heavy affliction interrupted [illegible]ion, and gathered my affe[illegible] graves of beloved [illegible] was my duty to gl[illegible] dealing with me[illegible]e min[illegible] ld[illegible]

part of those of modern times. In these, the question is one of politics, and the object proposed is the establishment or overthrow of the power of the one, or of the many. The love of truth, of holiness, of eternal things, was the simple and powerful spring which gave effect to that which we have to narrate. It is the evidence of a gradual advance in human nature. In truth, if man, instead of seeking only material, temporal, and earthly interests, aims at a higher object, and seeks spiritual and immortal blessings,—he advances, he progresses. The Reformation is one of the most memorable days of this progress. It is a pledge that the struggle of our own times will terminate in favour of truth, by a triumph yet more spiritual and glorious.

Christianity and the Reformation are two of the greatest revolutions in history. They were not limited to one nation, like the various political movements which history records, but extended to many nations, and their effects are destined to be felt to the ends of the earth.

Christianity and the Reformation are, indeed, the same revolution, but working at different periods, and in dissimilar circumstances. They differ in secondary features:—they are alike in their first lines and leading characteristics. The one is the re-appearance of the other. The former closes the old order of things;—the latter begins the new. Between them is the middle age. One is the parent of the other; and if the daughter is, in some respects,

inferior, she has, in others, characters altogether peculiar to herself.

The suddenness of its action is one of these characters of the Reformation. The great revolutions which have drawn after them the fall of a monarchy, or an entire change of political system, or launched the human mind in a new career of developement, have been slowly and gradually prepared; the power to be displaced has long been mined, and its principal supports have given way. It was even thus at the introduction of Christianity. But the Reformation, at the first glance, seems to offer a different aspect. The Church of Rome is seen, under Leo X., in all its strength and glory. A monk speaks,—and in the half of Europe this power and glory suddenly crumble into dust. This revolution reminds us of the words by which the Son of God announces his second advent: "As the lightning cometh forth from the west and shineth unto the east, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

This rapidity is inexplicable to those who see in this great event only a reform; who make it simply an act of critical judgment, consisting in a choice of doctrines,—the abandoning of some, the preserving others, and combining those retained, so as to make of them a new code of doctrine.

How could an entire people?—how could many nations have so rapidly performed so difficult a work? How could such an act of critical judgment kindle

the enthusiasm indispensable to great and especially to sudden revolutions? But the Reformation was an event of a very different kind; and this its history will prove. It was the pouring forth anew of that life which Christianity had brought into the world. It was the triumph of the noblest of doctrines—of that which animates those who receive it with the purest and most powerful enthusiasm,—the doctrine of *Faith*—the doctrine of *Grace*. If the Reformation had been what many Catholics and Protestants imagine,—if it had been that negative system of a negative reason, which rejects with childish impatience whatever displeases it, and disowns the grand ideas and leading truths of universal Christianity,—it would never have overpasssed the threshold of an academy,—of a cloister or even of a monk's cell. But it had no sympathy with what is commonly intended by the word Protestantism. Far from having sustained any loss of vital energy, it arose at once like a man full of strength and resolution.

Two considerations will account for the rapidity and extent of this revolution. One of these must be sought in God, the other among men. The impulse was given by an unseen hand of power, and the change which took place was the work of God. This will be the conclusion arrived at by every one who considers the subject with impartiality and attention, and does not rest in a superficial view. But the historian has a further office to perform:—God acts by second causes. Many circumstances, which have often

escaped observation, gradually prepared men for the great transformation of the sixteenth century, so that the human mind was ripe when the hour of its emancipation arrived.

The office of the historian is to combine these two principal elements in the picture he presents. This is what is attempted in the present work.—We shall be easily understood, so long as we investigate the secondary causes which contributed to bring about the revolution we have undertaken to describe. Many will, perhaps, be slower of comprehension, and will be inclined even to charge us with superstition, when we shall ascribe to God the accomplishment of the work. And yet that thought is what we particularly cherish. The history takes as its guiding star the simple and pregnant truth that GOD IS IN HISTORY. But this truth is commonly forgotten, and sometimes disputed. It seems fit, therefore, that we should open our views, and by so doing justify the course we have taken.

In these days, history can no longer be that dead letter of facts to recording which the majority of the earlier historians confined themselves. It is felt that, as in man's nature, so in his history, there are two elements,—matter and spirit. Our great writers, unwilling to restrict themselves to the production of a simple recital, which would have been but a barren chronicle, have sought for some principle of life to animate the materials of the past.

Some have borrowed such a principle from the

rules of art; they have aimed at the simplicity, truth, and *picturesque* of description; and have endeavoured to make their narratives *live* by the interest of the events themselves.

Others have sought in philosophy the spirit which should fecundate their labours. With incidents they have intermingled reflections,—instructions, —political and philosophic truths,—and have thus enlivened their recitals with a moral which they have elicited from them, or ideas they have been able to associate with them.

Both these methods are, doubtless, useful, and should be employed within certain limits. But there is another source whence we must above all seek for the ability to enter into the understanding, the mind, and the life of past ages;—and this is Religion. History must live by that principle of life which is proper to it, and that life is God. He must be acknowledged and proclaimed in history;—and the course of events must be displayed as the annals of the government of a Supreme Disposer.

I have descended into the lists to which the recitals of our historians attracted me. I have there seen the actions of men and of nations developing themselves with power, and encountering in hostile collision;—I have heard I know not what clangour of arms;—but no where has my attention been directed to the majestic aspect of the Judge who presides over the struggle.

And yet there is a principle of movement ema-

nating from God himself in all the changes among nations. God looks upon that wide stage on which the generations of men successively meet and struggle. He is there, it is true, an invisible God; but if the profaner multitude pass before Him without noticing Him, because he is "a God that hideth himself,"--thoughtful spirits, and such as feel their need of the principle of their being, seek him with the more earnestness, and are not satisfied until they lie prostrate at his feet. And their search is richly rewarded. For, from the heights to which they are obliged to climb to meet their God,—the world's history, instead of offering, as to the ignorant crowd, a confused chaos, appears a majestic temple, which the invisible hand of God erects, and which rises to His glory above the rock of humanity.

Shall we not acknowledge the hand of God in those great men, or in those mighty nations which arise,—come forth, as it were, from the dust of the earth, and give a new impulse, a new form, or a new destiny to human affairs? Shall we not acknowledge His hand in those heroes who spring up among men at appointed times; who display activity and energy beyond the ordinary limits of human strength; and around whom individuals and nations gather, as if to a superior and mysterious power? Who launched them into the expanse of ages, like comets of vast extent and flaming trains, appearing at long intervals, to scatter among the superstitious tribes of men an-

of plenty and joy—or of calamities and terror? Who, but God himself? Alexander would seek his own origin in the abodes of the Divinity. And in the most irreligious age there is no eminent glory but is seen in some way or other seeking to connect itself with the idea of divine interposition.

And those revolutions which, in their progress, precipitate dynasties and nations to the dust, those heaps of ruin which we meet with in the sands of the desert, those majestic remains which the field of human history offers to our reflection, do they not testify aloud to the truth that God is in History? Gibbon, seated on the ancient Capitol, and contemplating its noble ruins, acknowledged the intervention of a superior destiny. He saw,—he felt its presence; wherever his eye turned it met him; that shadow of a mysterious power re-appeared from behind every ruin; and he conceived the project of depicting its operation in the disorganization, the decline, and the corruption of that power of Rome which had enslaved the nations. Shall not that mighty hand which this man of admirable genius, but who had not bowed the knee to Jesus Christ, discerned among the scattered monuments of Romulus and of Marcus Aurelius,—the busts of Cicero, and Virgil,—Trajan's trophies, and Pompey's horses, be confessed by us as the hand of our God?

But what superior lustre does the truth—that God is in history—acquire under the Christian dispensation? What is Jesus Christ—but God's purpose

in the world's history? It was the discovery of Jesus Christ which admitted the greatest of modern historians* to the just comprehension of his subject. —"The gospel," says he, "is the fulfilment of all hopes, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of all revolutions, the key to all the seeming contradictions of the physical and moral world,—it is life,—it is immortality. Since I have known the Saviour, every thing is clear;—with him, there is nothing I cannot solve."†

Thus speaks this distinguished historian; and, in truth, is it not the keystone of the arch,—is it not the mysterious bond which holds together the things of earth and connects them with those of heaven,—that God has appeared in our nature? What! God has been born into this world, and we are asked to think and write, as if He were not every where working out his own will in its history? Jesus Christ is the true God of human history; the very lowliness of his appearance may be regarded as one proof of it. If man designs a shade or a shelter upon earth, we look to see preparations,—materials, scaffolding, and workmen. But God, when he will give shade or shelter, takes the small seed which the new-born infant might clasp in its feeble hand, and deposits it in the bosom of the earth, and from that seed, imperceptible in its beginning, he produces the majestic tree, under whose spreading boughs the families of men may find shelter. To achieve great

* John Von Müller. † Lettre à C. Bonnet.

results by imperceptible means, is the law of the divine dealings.

It is this law which has received its noblest illustration in Jesus Christ. The religion which has now taken possession of the gates of all nations, which at this hour reigns, or hovers over all the tribes of the earth, from east to west, and which even a sceptical philosophy is compelled to acknowledge as the spiritual and social law of this world;—that religion, than which there is nothing nobler under the vault of heaven,—nay, in the very universe of creation;— what was its commencement? . . . A child born in the meanest town of the most despised country of the earth;—a child whose mother had not even what falls to the lot of the most indigent and wretched woman of our cities,—a room to bring forth;—a child born in a stable and placed in an ox's crib . . . . O God! I acknowledge thee there, and I adore thee.

The Reformation recognised the same law of God's operations: and it had the consciousness that it fulfilled it. The thought that God is in history is often put forth by the Reformers. We find it on one occasion in particular expressed by Luther, under one of those comparisons familiar and grotesque, yet not without a certain sublimity, which he took pleasure in using, that he might be understood by the people. "The world," said he one day, in a conversation with his friend at table,—"the world is a vast and grand game of cards, made up of

emperors, kings, and princes. [illegible] centuries has beaten emperors [illegible] They have been put down, a[illegible] Then came our Lord God; he [illegible]ne ca[illegible] took the most worthless of the[illegible] (Luther), and with it he has beaten the Pope, the conqueror of the kings of the earth . . . There is the ace of God. 'He has cast down the mighty from their seats, and has exalted them of low degree,' as Mary says."

The age of which I am about to retrace the history is most important for our own generation. Man, when he feels his weakness, is generally inclined to seek assistance in the institutions he sees standing around him, or else in groundless inventions of his imagination. The history of the Reformation shews that nothing new can be wrought with "old things," and that if, according to the Saviour's word, we need new bottles for new wine, we need also new wine for new bottles. The history of the Reformation directs men to God, who orders all events in history; to that divine word, ever ancient in the eternal nature of the truths it contains, ever new in the regenerative influence it exercises,—that word which, three centuries ago, purified society, brought back the faith of God to souls enfeebled by superstition, and which, in every age of man's history, is the source whence cometh salvation.

It is singular to observe many persons, impelled by a vague desire to believe in something settled, addressing themselves now-a-days to old Catholicism.

, the movement is natural. Religion is
nown (in France), that men scarce think of
it elsewhere than where they see it inscribed
large letters on a banner that time has made
enerable. We do not say that all Catholicism is incapable of affording to man what he stands in need of. We think Catholicism should be carefully distinguished from Popery. Popery is, in our judgment, an erroneous and destructive system; but we are far from confounding Catholicism with Popery. How many respectable men,—how many sincere Christians, has not the Catholic Church comprised within its pale! What important services were rendered by Catholicism to the existing European nations, in the age of their first formation,—at a period when itself was still richly imbued with the Gospel, and when Popery was as yet only seen behind it as a faint shadow! But those times are past. In our day, attempts are made to reconnect Catholicism with Popery; and if Catholic and Christian truths are put forward, they are but as baits made use of to draw men into the net of the hierarchy. There is, therefore, nothing to be hoped from that quarter. Has Popery renounced so much as one of its observances, of its doctrines, or of its claims? The religion which was insupportable in other ages will be less so in ours? What regeneration has ever emanated from Rome? Is it from that priestly hierarchy, full, even to overflow, of earthly passions,—that that spirit of faith, of charity, of hope

can come forth, which alone can save us? Can an exhausted system, which has scarcely strength for its own need, and is everywhere in the struggles of death,—living only by external aids,—can such a system communicate life, and breathe throughout Christian society the heavenly breath that it requires?

This craving void in the heart and mind which betrays itself in our contemporaries, will it lead others to apply to that modern Protestantism which has, in many parts, taken the place of the powerful doctrines of Apostles and Reformers? A notable uncertainty of doctrine prevails in many of those Reformed churches whose first members sealed with their blood the clear and living faith that animated their hearts. Men distinguished for their information, and in all other things, susceptible of generous emotions, are found carried away into singular aberrations. A vague faith in the divine authority of the Gospel is the only standard they will maintain. But what is this Gospel? The whole question turns on that; and yet on that they are silent, or else each one speaks after his own mind. What avails it to know that God has placed in the midst of the nations a vessel containing their cure, if we are regardless what it contains, or fail to appropriate its contents to ourselves? *This* system cannot fill up the void of the times. Whilst the faith of Apostles and Reformers discovers itself, at this day, every where active and effectual for the conversion

of the world, this vague system does nothing,—throws light on nothing,—vivifies nothing.

But let us not abandon all hopes. Does not Catholicism confess the great doctrines of Christianity? does it not acknowledge the one God, *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*,—Creator, Saviour, and Sanctifier? And that vague Protestantism,—does it not hold in its hand the book of life, for conviction and instruction in righteousness? And how many upright minds, honoured in the sight of men and beloved of God, are there not found among those subjected to these two systems! How can we help loving them? How refrain from ardently desiring their complete emancipation from human elements? Charity is boundless; it embraces the most distant opinions to lead them to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Already there are indications that these two extreme opinions are in motion, and drawing nearer to Jesus Christ, who is the centre of the truth. Are there not already some Roman Catholic congregations among whom the reading of the Bible is recommended and practised? and as to Protestant rationalism, how many steps has it not already taken towards Jesus Christ? It never was the offspring of the Reformation;—for the history of that great change will show that it was an epoch of faith:—but may we not be permitted to hope that it is drawing nearer to it? Will not the power of the truth come forth to it from the word of God? and will not its coming have the effect of transforming it?

Already we often see in it a feeling of religion, inadequate no doubt, but yet a movement in the direction of sound learning, encouraging us to look for more definite advances.

But modern Protestantism, like old Catholicism, is, in itself, a thing from which nothing can be hoped,—a thing quite powerless. Something very different is necessary, to restore to men of our day the energy that saves. A something is requisite which is not of man, but of God. "Give me," said Archimedes, "a point out of the world, and I will raise the world from its poles." True Christianity is this standing beyond the world, which lifts the heart of man from its double pivot of selfishness and sensuality, and which will one day move the whole world from its evil way, and cause it to turn on a new axis of righteousness and peace.

Whenever religion has been the subject of discussion, there have been three points to which our attention has been directed. God,—Man,—and the Priest. There can be but three kinds of religion on this earth, according as God, Man, or the Priest, is its author or its head. I call that the religion of the Priest, which is devised by the priest for the glory of the priest, and in which a priestly caste is dominant. I apply the name of the religion of Man to those systems and various opinions framed by man's reason, and which, as they are the offspring of his infirmity, are, by consequence, destitute of all sanative efficacy. I apply the words

religion of God,—to the Truth, such as God himself has given it, and of which the object and the effect are God's glory and Man's salvation.

Hierarchism, or the religion of the priest; Christianity or the religion of God; rationalism, or the religion of man;—such are the three doctrines which in our day divide Christendom. There is no salvation, either for man or for society, in hierarchism, or in rationalism. Christianity alone can give life to the world; and, unhappily, of the three prevailing systems, it is not that which numbers most followers.

Some, however, it has. Christianity is operating its work of regeneration among many Catholics of Germany, and doubtless also of other countries. It is now accomplishing it with more purity, and power, as we think, among the evangelical Christians of Switzerland, of France, of Great Britain, and of the United States. Blessed be God, such individual or social regenerations, wrought by the Gospel, are no longer in these days prodigies to be sought in ancient annals. We have ourselves witnessed a powerful awakening, begun in the midst of conflicts and trials, in a small republic, whose citizens live happy and tranquil in the bosom of the wonders with which creation surrounds them.* It is but a beginning;—and already from the plenteous horn of the Gospel we see come forth among this people a noble, elevated, and courageous profession

* Canton of Vaud.

of the great truths of God; a liberty [illegible] and real; a government full of zeal and [illegible] an affection, elsewhere too rarely found, of magistrates for people, and of the people for their magistrates; a powerful impulse communicated to education and general instruction, which will make of this country, an example for imitation; a slow, but certain amelioration in morals; men of talent, *all Christians*, and who rival the first writers of our language. All these riches developed between the dark Jura and the summits of the Alps, on the magnificent shores of Lake Leman, must strike the traveller attracted thither by the wonders of those mountains and valleys, and present to his meditation one of the most eloquent pages which the Providence of God has inscribed in favour of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is the history of the Reformation *in general* that I propose to write. I intend to trace it among different nations,—to point out the same effects of the same truths,—as well as the diversities which take their origin in the varieties of national character. But it is in Germany especially that we shall see and describe the history of the Reformation. It is there we find its primitive type;—it is there that it offers the fullest development of its organization. It is there that it bears, above all, the marks of a revolution not confined to one or more nations, but, on the contrary, affecting the world at large. The German Reformation is the

true and fundamental Reformation. It is the great planet, and the rest revolve in wider or narrower circles around it, like satellites drawn after it by its movement. And yet the Reformation in SWITZERLAND must, in some respects, be considered as an exception, both because it took place at the very same time as that of Germany, and independently of it; and because it bore, especially at a later period, some of those grander features which are seen in the latter. Notwithstanding that recollections of ancestry and of refuge,—and the memory of struggle, suffering, and exile, endured in the cause of the Reformation in France,—give, in my view, a peculiar charm to the history of its vicissitudes,—I nevertheless doubt whether I could place it in the same rank as those which I have here spoken of.

From what I have said, it will be seen that I believe the Reformation to be a work of God. Nevertheless, as its historian, I hope to be impartial. I think I have spoken of the principal Roman Catholic actors in the great drama, Leo X., Albert of Magdeburg; Charles V., and Doctor Eck, &c. more favourably than the majority of historians. And, on the other hand, I have had no wish to conceal the faults and errors of the Reformers.

This history has been drawn from the original sources with which a long residence in Germany, the Low Countries, and Switzerland has made me familiar; as well as from the study, in the original

languages, of documents relating to the religious history of Great Britain and other countries. Down to this time we possess no history of that remarkable period. Nothing indicated that the deficiency would be supplied when I commenced this work. This circumstance could alone have led me to undertake it;—and I here allege it in my justification. The want still exists;—and I pray Him from whom cometh down every good gift, to cause that this work may, by His blessing, be made profitable to some who shall read it.

The editions of Luther's works quoted are the German edition printed at Leipsic, [L. Opp. (L.);] the German edition by Walch, L. Opp. (W.); and the edition in Latin printed at Wittemberg, L. Opp. Lat.:—of the Letters, De Wette's excellent edition, 5 vols.

HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION.

BOOK I.

STATE OF EUROPE PRIOR TO THE REFORMATION.

THE world was tottering on its old foundations when Christianity appeared. The various religions which had sufficed for an earlier age no longer satisfied the nations. The mind of the existing generation could no longer tabernacle in the ancient forms. The gods of the nations had lost their oracles—as the nations had lost their liberty in Rome. Brought face to face in the Capitol they had mutually destroyed the illusion of their divinity. A vast void had ensued in the religious opinions of mankind.

A kind of Deism, destitute of spirit and vitality, hovered for a time over the abyss in which had been engulphed the superstitions of heathenism.—But, like all negative opinions, it had no power to edify. The narrow prepossessions of the several nations had fallen with the fall of their gods,—their various populations melted, the one into the other. In Europe, Asia, Africa, all was but one vast empire, and the human family began to feel its comprehensiveness and its unity.

Then the Word was made flesh.

God appeared amongst men, and as Man, to save that which was lost. In Jesus of Nazareth dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

This is the greatest event in the annals of all time. The former ages had been a preparation for it; the latter unroll from it. It is their centre and connecting link.

From this period the popular superstitions had no significancy, and such feeble relics of them as outlived the general wreck of incredulity, vanished before the majestic orb of eternal truth.

The Son of Man lived thirty-three years on this earth. He suffered, he died, he rose again,—he ascended into heaven. His disciples, beginning at Jerusalem, travelled over the Roman Empire and the world, every where proclaiming their Master the author of everlasting salvation. From the midst of a people who rejected intercourse with others —proceeded a Mercy that invited and embraced All. A great number of Asiatics, of Greeks, of Romans, hitherto led by their priests to the feet of dumb idols, believed at their word. "The Gospel suddenly beamed on the earth like a ray of the sun," says Eusebius. A breath of life moved over this vast field of death. A new, a holy people was formed upon the earth; and the astonished world beheld in the disciples of the despised Galilean a purity, a self-denial, a charity, a heroism, of which they retained no idea.

The new religion had two features amongst many others which especially distinguished it from all the human systems which fell before it. One had

reference to the ministers of its worship,—the other to its doctrines.

The ministers of paganism were almost the gods of those human inventions. The priests led the people, so long at least as their eyes were not opened. A vast and haughty hierarchy oppressed the world. Jesus Christ dethroned these living idols, abolished this proud hierarchy,—took from man what man had taken from God, and re-established the soul in direct communication with the divine fountain of truth, by proclaiming himself the only Master and the only Mediator. "One is your master, even Christ (said he), and all ye are brethren." (Matt. xxiii.)

As to doctrine, human religions had taught that salvation was of man. The religions of the earth had invented an earthly salvation. They had taught men that heaven would be given to them as a reward; they had fixed its price, and what a price! The religion of God taught that salvation was His gift, and emanated from an amnesty and sovereign grace. God hath *given* to us eternal life. (1 John v. 11.)

Undoubtedly Christianity cannot be summed up in these two points: but they seem to govern the subject, especially when historically viewed. And as it is impossible to trace the opposition between truth and error in all things, we have selected its most prominent features.

Such were the two principles that composed the religion which then took possession of the Empire and of the whole world. The standing of a Christian is in them,—and apart from them, Chris-

tianity itself disappears. On their preservation or their loss depended its decline or its growth. One of these principles was to govern the history of the religion; the other its doctrine. They both presided in the beginning. Let us see how they were lost: and let us first trace the fate of the former.

The Church was in the beginning a community of brethren. All its members were taught of God; and each possessed the liberty of drawing for himself from the divine fountain of light.* The epistles, which then settled the great questions of doctrine, did not bear the pompous title of any single man, or ruler. We find from the holy Scriptures that they began simply with these words: "The apostles, elders and brethren, to our brethren." (Acts xv. 23.)

But the writings of these very apostles forewarn us that from the midst of these brethren, there shall arise a power which shall overthrow this simple and primitive order. (2 Thess. ii.)

Let us contemplate the formation and trace the development of this power alien to the Church.

Paul of Tarsus, one of the chiefest apostles of the new religion, had arrived at Rome, the capital of the Empire and of the world, preaching the salvation that cometh from God only. A church was formed beside the throne of the Cæsars. Founded by this same apostle, it was at first composed of converted Jews, Greeks, and some inhabitants of Rome. For a while it shone brightly as a light set upon a

* John vi. 45.

hill, and its faith was every where spoken of. But ere long it declined from its first simplicity. The spiritual dominion of Rome arose as its political and military power had done before, and was slowly and gradually extended.

The first pastors or bishops of Rome employed themselves in the beginning in converting to the faith of Christ the towns and villages that surrounded the city. The necessity which the bishops and pastors felt of referring in cases of difficulty to an enlightened guide, and the gratitude which they owed to the metropolitan church, led them to maintain an intimate union with her. As is generally the consequence in such circumstances, this reasonable union soon degenerated into dependence. The bishops of Rome regarded as a right the superiority which the neighbouring churches had voluntarily yielded. The encroachments of power form a large portion of all history: the resistance of those whose rights are invaded forms the other part: and the ecclesiastical power could not escape that intoxication which leads those who are lifted up to seek to raise themselves still higher. It felt all the influence of this general weakness of human nature.

Nevertheless the supremacy of the Roman bishop was at first limited* to the overlooking of the

* Suburbicaria loca. See the sixth canon of the Council of Nice, cited by Rufinus as follows:—Et ut apud Alexandriam et in urbe Roma vetusta consuetudo servetur ut vel ille Ægypti vel hic suburbicariarum ecclesiarum sollicitudinem gerat, &c. *Hist. Eccles.* x. 6.

churches, in the territory lawfully subject to the prefect of Rome. But the rank which this imperial city held in the world offered to the ambition of its first pastors a prospect of wider sway. The consideration which the different Christian bishops enjoyed in the second century was in proportion to the rank of the city over which they presided. Rome was the greatest, the richest, and the most powerful city in the world. It was the seat of empire, the mother of nations. "All the inhabitants of the earth are hers,"* said Julian, and Claudian declares her to be "the fountain of laws."†

If Rome be the Queen of cities, why should not her pastor be the King of Bishops? Why should not the Roman church be the mother of Christendom? Why should not all nations be her children, and her authority be the universal law? It was natural to the heart of man to reason thus. Ambitious Rome did so.

Hence it was that when heathen Rome fell, she bequeathed to the humble minister of the God of peace, seated in the midst of her own ruins, the proud titles which her invincible sword had won from the nations of the earth.

The bishops of the other parts of the Empire, yielding to the charm that Rome had exercised for ages over all nations, followed the example of the Campagna, and aided the work of usurpation. They willingly rendered to the Bishop of Rome something of that honour which was due to this Queen

* Julian Orat. I. † Claud. in Paneg. Stilic. lib. 3.

of cities: nor was there at first any thing of dependence in the honour thus yielded. They acted toward the Roman pastor as equals toward an equal;* but usurped power swells like the avalanche. Exhortations, at first simply fraternal, soon became commands in the mouth of the Roman Pontiff. A chief place amongst equals appeared to him a throne.

The Bishops of the West favoured this encroachment of the Roman pastors, either from jealousy of the Eastern bishops, or because they preferred subjection to a pope to the dominion of a temporal power.

On the other hand, the theological sects which distracted the East strove, each for itself, to gain an interest at Rome, hoping to triumph over its opponents by the support of the principal of the Western churches.

Rome carefully recorded these requests and intercessions, and smiled to see the nations throw themselves into her arms. She neglected no opportunity of increasing and extending her power. The praises, the flattery, and exaggerated compliments paid to her, and her being consulted by other churches, became in her hands as titles and documents of her authority. Such is the heart of man exalted to a throne; flattery intoxicates him, and his head grows dizzy. What he possesses impels him to aspire after more.

The doctrine of "the Church," and of "the necessity for its visible unity," which had gained footing

* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 24. Socrat. Hist. Eccles. c. 21. Cyprian, ep. 59, 72, 75.

as early as the third century, favoured the pretensions of Rome. The great bond, which originally bound together the members of the church, was a living faith in the heart, by which all were joined to Christ as their one Head. But various causes ere long conspired to originate and develope the idea of a necessity for some exterior fellowship. Men, accustomed to the associations and political forms of an earthly country, carried their views and habits of mind into the spiritual and everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ. Persecution—powerless to destroy, or even to shake the new community, compressed it into the form of a more compacted body.—To the errors that arose in the schools of deism, or in the various sects, was opposed the truth "one and universal" received from the Apostles and preserved in the church. All this was well, so long as the invisible and spiritual church was identical with the visible and outward community. But soon a great distinction appeared:—the form and the vital principle parted asunder. The semblance of identical and external organization was gradually substituted in place of the internal and spiritual unity which is the very essence of a religion proceeding from God. Men suffered the precious perfume of faith to escape while they bowed themselves before the empty vase that had held it. Faith in the heart no longer knit together in one the members of the church. Then it was that other ties were sought; and Christians were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, ceremonies, and canons. The Living Church retiring by degrees to the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary

souls,—an exterior church was substituted in place of it, and installed in all its forms as of divine institution. Salvation no longer flowing forth from that word which was now hidden—it began to be affirmed that it was conveyed by means of certain invented forms, and that none could obtain it without resorting to such means! No one, it was said, can by his faith attain to everlasting life:—Christ communicated to the Apostles, and the Apostles to the Bishops, the unction of the Holy Spirit; and this Spirit is found only in this order of communication. In the beginning of the Gospel, whosoever had received the spirit of Jesus Christ was esteemed a member of the church:—now the order was inverted; and no one, unless a member of the church, was counted to have received the spirit of Jesus Christ.

As soon as the notion of a supposed necessity for a visible unity* of the church had taken root, another error began to spread:—namely, that it was needful that there should be some outward representative of that unity. Though no trace of

* From the previous reflections it is clear that the author does not disparage that Unity which is the manifested result of the partaking of the life of the Head by the members;—but only that lifeless form of unity which man has devised in place of it. We learn from John xvii. 21—23, that the true and real One-ness of BELIEVERS was to be *manifested*,—so that the world might believe that the Father had sent Jesus.—Hence we may conclude that the things which divide, instead of gathering, the "little flock" are contrary to his mind; and among such things must be classed not alone the carnality of names, (1 Cor. iii. 4.)—but every commandment or requirement of men that excludes the very weakest whom God has received. (Rom. xiv. 1—3; Acts xi. 17, compare Acts ii. 44, &c.)—*Translator.*

any primacy of St. Peter above the rest of the Apostles appears in the Gospels; although the idea of a primacy is at variance with the mutual relation of the disciples as "brethren,"—and even with the spirit of the dispensation which requires all the children of the Father to minister one to another,* acknowledging but one Master and Head;—and though the Lord Jesus had rebuked his disciples whenever their carnal hearts conceived desires of pre-eminence;—a Primacy of St. Peter was invented, and supported by misinterpreted texts, and men proceeded to acknowledge in that Apostle, and in his pretended successor, the visible representative of visible unity—and head of the whole Church!

The constitution of the patriarchate contributed further to the exaltation of the Roman Papacy. As early as the first three centuries, the churches of the metropolitan cities had been held in peculiar honour. The Council of Nice, in its sixth canon, named especially three cities, whose churches, according to it, held an anciently established authority over those of the surrounding provinces. These were Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch. The political origin of this distinction may be discerned in the name which was at first given to the bishops of these cities; they were called Exarchs, like the political governors.† In later times they bore the more ecclesiastical name of Patriarch. It is in the Council of Constantinople that we find this title first used. This same Council created a new Patri-

* 1 Pet. iv. 10.

† See the Council of Chalcedon, canons 8 and 18, ὁ ἔξαρχος τῆς διοικήσεως.

archate, that of Constantinople itself, the new Rome, the second capital of the Empire. Rome at this period shared the rank of Patriarchate with these three churches. But when the invasion of Mahomet had swept away the bishoprics of Alexandria and Antioch, when the see of Constantinople fell away, and in later times even separated itself from the West, Rome alone remained, and the circumstances of the times causing everything to rally around her, she remained from that time without a rival.

New and more powerful partisans than all the rest soon came to her assistance. Ignorance and superstition took possession of the Church, and delivered it up to Rome, blindfold and manacled.

Yet this bringing into captivity was not effected without a struggle. The voices of particular churches frequently asserted their independence. This courageous remonstrance was especially heard in proconsular Africa and in the East.*

To silence the cries of the churches, Rome found

* Cyprian, bishop of Carthage,—speaking of Stephen, bishop of Rome,—has these words. "Magis ac magis ejus *errorem* denotabis qui hæreticorum causam contra Christianos et contra *Ecclesiam Dei* asserere conatur. . . . . qui unitatem et veritatem de divina lege venientem non tenens . . . . Consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est." (Ep. 74.) Firmilian, bishop of Cesarea in Cappadocia, writing in the latter part of the third century, observes, "Eos autem qui Romæ sunt non ea in omnibus observare quæ sunt ab origine tradita et frustra auctoritatem apostolorum prætendere . . . . Cæterum *nos* (the bishops of the churches of Asia, more ancient than the Roman church) veritati et consuetudinem jungimus, et consuetudini Romanorum consuetudinem sed *veritatis* opponimus; ab initio hoc tenentes quod a Christo et ab apostolo traditum est." (Cypr. Ep. 75.) These testimonies are of high importance.

new allies. Princes, who in those troublesome times often saw their thrones tottering, offered their adherence to the Church, in exchange for her support. They yielded to her spiritual authority, on condition of her paying them with secular dominion. They left her to deal at will with the *souls* of men, provided only she would deliver them from their enemies. The power of the hierarchy in the ascending scale and of the imperial power which was declining, leaned thus one toward the other—and so accelerated their two-fold destiny.

Rome could not lose by this. An edict of Theodosius II. and of Valentinian III. proclaimed the bishop of Rome "ruler of the whole church." Justinian issued a similar decree. These decrees did not contain all that the Popes pretended to see in them. But in those times of ignorance it was easy for them to gain reception for that interpretation which was most favourable to themselves. The dominion of the Emperors in Italy becoming every day more precarious, the Bishops of Rome took advantage of it to withdraw themselves from their dependence.

But already the forests of the North had poured forth the most effectual promoters of papal power. The barbarians who had invaded the West and settled themselves therein,—but recently converted to Christianity,—ignorant of the spiritual character of the Church, and feeling the want of an external pomp in religion, prostrated themselves in a half savage and half heathen state of mind at the feet of the Chief Priest of Rome. At the same time the people of the West also submitted to him. First

the Vandals, then the Ostrogoths, a short time after the Burgundians and the Alains, then the Visigoths, and at last the Lombards and the Anglo-Saxons came bowing the knee to the Roman Pontiff. It was the sturdy shoulders of the idolatrous children of the North which elevated to the supreme throne of Christendom a pastor of the banks of the Tiber.

These events occurred in the West at the beginning of the seventh century, at the precise period that the Mahometan power arose in the East, and prepared to overrun another division of the earth.

From that time the evil continued increasing. In the eighth century we see the Bishops of Rome on the one hand resisting the Greek Emperors, their lawful sovereigns, and endeavouring to expel them from Italy; whilst on the other they court the French Mayors of the Palace, and demand from this new power now arising in the West, a share in the wreck of the empire. We see Rome establish her usurped authority between the East, which she repelled, and the West which she courted; thus erecting her throne upon two revolutions.

Alarmed by the progress of the Arabs, who had made themselves masters of Spain, and boasted that they would speedily traverse the Pyrenees and the Alps, and proclaim the name of Mahomet on the seven hills;—terrified at the daring of Aistolpho, who, at the head of his Lombards, threatened to put every Roman to death,* and brandished his sword

* Fremens ut leo . . . asserens omnes uno gladio jugulari. (Anastasius, Bibl. Vit. Pontif. p. 83.)

before the city gates—Rome, in the prospect of ruin, turned on all sides for protection, and threw herself into the arms of the Franks. The usurper Pepin demanded the confirmation of his claim to the throne:—the Pope granted it; and, in return, obtained his declaration in defence of the "Republic of God." Pepin recovered from the Lombards their conquests from the Emperor; but instead of restoring them to that Prince, he deposited the keys of the conquered cities on the altar of St. Peter's; and, with uplifted hand, swore that it was not in the cause of man that he had taken arms,—but to obtain from God the remission of his sins, and to do homage for his conquests to St. Peter! Thus did France establish the temporal power of the Popes.

Charlemagne appeared.—At one time we see him climbing the stairs of St. Peter's, devoutly kissing the steps:—again he presents himself,—but it is as master of all the nations composing the Western Empire, and of Rome itself. Leo III. decided to confer the rank on one who already possessed the power; and in the year 800, on Christmas day, he placed the crown of the Roman Emperors on the brow of the son of Pepin.* From this period the Pope belonged to the empire of the Franks, and his connexion with the East was at an end: thus loosing his hold on a decayed tree, nodding to its fall, in order to graft himself upon a wild but vigorous sapling. Little could he then have dared to

* Visum est et ipsi Apostolico Leoni . . . ut ipsum Carolum imperatorem nominare debuisset, qui ipsam Romam tenebat ubi semper Cæsares sedere soliti erant et reliquas sedes . . . . (Annalista Lambecianus ad an. 801.)

hope for the elevation that awaited his successors among the German nations to which he thus joined himself.

Charlemagne bequeathed to his feeble successors only the wreck of his own power. In the ninth century disunion every where weakened the civil authority. Rome perceived that this was the moment to exalt herself. What better opportunity could offer for achieving the Church's independence of the state than when the crown of Charles was broken, and its fragments scattered over his former empire.

It was then that the pretended decretals of Isidorus appeared. In this collection of alleged decrees of the Popes, the most ancient bishops, contemporaries of Tacitus and Quintilian, were made to speak the barbarous Latin of the ninth century. The customs and constitutions of the Franks were gravely attributed to the Romans in the time of the Emperors. Popes quoted the Bible in the Latin translation of St. Jerome, who lived one, two, or three centuries after them. And Victor, bishop of Rome in the year 192, wrote to Theophilus, who was archbishop of Alexandria in 385. The impostor who had fabricated this collection, endeavoured to prove that all bishops derived their authority from the bishop of Rome, who held his own immediately from Christ. He not only recorded all the successive acquisitions of the Pontiffs, but carried them back to the earliest times. The Popes did not blush to avail themselves of this contemptible imposture. As early as 865, Nicholas I. selected weapons from this repo-

sitory to attack princes and bishops.* This barefaced fabrication was for ages the arsenal of Rome.

Nevertheless the vices and atrocities of the Pontiffs were such as suspended for a time the object of the decretals. The Papacy signalised its sitting down at the table of Kings by shameful libations; and intoxication and madness reigned in its orgies. About this time tradition places upon the Papal throne a girl named Joan, who had taken refuge at Rome with her lover, and whose sex was betrayed by the pains of child-birth coming upon her in the midst of a solemn procession. But let us not needlessly exaggerate the shame of the Roman Pontiffs. Women of abandoned character reigned at this period in Rome. The throne which affected to exalt itself above the majesty of kings, was sunk in the filth of vice. Theodora and Marozia installed and deposed at their pleasure the pretended teachers of the Church of Christ, and placed on the throne of St. Peter their lovers, their sons, and their grandsons. These too well authenticated charges may have given rise to the tradition of the female Pope Joan.

Rome was one vast scene of debauchery, wherein the most powerful families in Italy contended for pre-eminence. The counts of Tuscany were generally victorious in these contests. In 1033, this family dared to place upon the pontifical throne, under the name of Benedict IXth, a young boy brought up in debauchery. This child of twelve years of age, continued when Pope in the practice

* See Ep. ad Univ. Epi. sc. Gall. (Mansi XV.)

of the same scandalous vices.* Another party elected in his stead Sylvester III., and Benedict, with a conscience loaded with adulteries and hands stained with homicide, at last sold the Papacy to a Roman ecclesiastic.†

The Emperors of Germany, roused to indignation by these enormities, purged Rome with the sword. In 1047, a German bishop, Leo IX. possessed himself of the pontifical throne.

The Empire, using its right as suzerain, raised up the triple crown from the mire, and preserved the degraded Papacy by giving to it suitable chiefs. In 1046, Henry III. deposed the three rival Popes, and pointing with his finger, on which glittered the ring of the Roman patricians, designated the bishop to whom St. Peter's keys should be confided. Four Popes, all Germans, and chosen by the Emperor, succeeded. Whenever the Pontiff of Rome died, a deputation from its church repaired to the Imperial court, just as the envoys of other dioceses, to solicit the nomination of a bishop to succeed him. The Emperors were not sorry to see the Popes reforming abuses—strengthening the influence of the church—holding councils—choosing and deposing prelates in spite of foreign princes:

* "Cujus quidam post adeptum sacerdotium vita quam turpis, quam fœda, quamque exęcranda exstiterit, horresco referre." (DESIDERIUS abbot of Cassino, afterwards Pope Victor III. de miraculis S. Benedicto, etc. lib. 3, init.)

† Theophylactus . . . . cum post multa adulteria et homicidia manibus suis perpetrata, etc. (BONIZO bishop of Sutri, afterwards of Plaisance, liber ad amicum

for in all this the Papacy, by its pretensions, did but exalt the power of the reigning Emperor, its suzerain Lord. But such excesses were full of peril to his authority. The power thus gradually acquired might at any moment be directed against the Emperor himself, and the reptile having gained strength might turn against the bosom that had warmed it,—and this result followed. The Papacy arose from its humiliation and soon trampled under foot the princes of the earth. To exalt the Papacy was to exalt the Church, to aggrandize religion, to ensure to the spirit the victory over the flesh, and to God the conquest of the world. Such were its maxims; in these, ambition found its advantage, and fanaticism its excuse.

The whole of this new policy is personified in one man, HILDEBRAND.

Hildebrand, who has been by turns indiscreetly exalted or unjustly traduced, is the personification of the Roman pontificate in its strength and glory. He is one of those characters in history, which include in themselves a new order of things, resembling in this respect Charlemagne, Luther, and Napoleon, in different spheres of action.

Leo IX. took notice of this monk as he was going to Cluny, and carried him with him to Rome. From that time Hildebrand was the soul of the Papacy, till he himself became Pope. He had governed the Church under different Pontiffs, before he himself reigned under the name of Gregory VII. One grand idea occupied his comprehensive mind. He desired to establish a visible theocracy, of which the Pope, as the vicar of

Christ, should be the head. The recollection of the ancient universal dominion of heathen Rome, haunted his imagination and animated his zeal. He wished to restore to Papal Rome what Rome had lost under the Emperors. "What Marius and Cæsar," said his flatterers, "could not effect by torrents of blood, you have accomplished by a word."

Gregory VII. was not actuated by the spirit of Christ. That spirit of truth, humility, and gentleness was to him unknown. He could sacrifice what he knew to be the truth whenever he judged it necessary to his policy. We may instance the case of Berengarius. But without doubt he was actuated by a spirit far above that of the generality of Pontiffs, and by a deep conviction of the justice of his cause. Enterprising, ambitious, persevering in his designs, he was at the same time skilful and politic in the use of the means of success.

His first task was to remodel the militia of the Church. It was needful to gain strength before attacking the Imperial authority. A council held at Rome removed the pastors from their families, and obliged them to devote themselves undividedly to the hierarchy. The law of celibacy, devised and carried into operation by the Popes, (who were themselves monks,) changed the clergy into a monastic order. Gregory VII. claimed to exercise over the whole body of bishops and priests of Christendom a power equal to that possessed by an abbot of Cluny over the order subjected to his rule.—The legates of Hildebrand passed through the provinces, depriving the pastors of their lawful partners, and the

Pope himself, if necessary, excited the populace against the married clergy.*

But Gregory's great aim was to emancipate Rome from subjection to the Emperor. Never would he have dared to conceive so ambitious a design, if the discord which disturbed the minority of Henry IV. and the revolt of the German princes from that young Emperor had not favoured his project. The Pope was at this time one of the magnates of the empire. Making common cause with some of the greatest of its vassals, he strengthened himself in the aristocratic interest, and then proceeded to prohibit all ecclesiastics from receiving investiture from the Emperor, under pain of excommunication.

He thus snapt asunder the ancient ties which connected the several pastors and their churches with the royal authority—but it was that he might bind them to the pontifical throne. He undertook to restrain by a powerful hand, priests, princes, and people—and to make the Pope an universal monarch. It was Rome *alone* that every priest was to fear—and in her only he was to hope. The kingdoms and principalities of the earth were to be her domain; and kings were to tremble before the thunders of the Jupiter of New Rome. Woe to those who should resist her. Their subjects were released from their oaths of allegiance—their whole country placed under interdict—public worship was to cease—the churches to be closed—the bells

* Hi quocumque prodeunt, clamores insultantium, digitos ostendentium, colaphos pulsantium, perferunt. Alii membris mutilati; alii per longos cruciatus superbe necati, &c.—Martene et Durand. Thes. Nov. Anecd. 1. 231.

mute—the sacraments no longer administered—and the malediction extended even to the dead, to whom, at the command of the proud Pontiff, the earth refused the peace and shelter of the tomb.

The Pope, whose power had been from the very beginning subordinate, first to the Roman Emperors; then to the Frankish princes; and lastly to the Emperors of Germany; at once freed himself, and assumed the place of an equal, if not of a Master. Yet Gregory the VIIth was in his turn humbled; Rome was taken, and Hildebrand obliged to flee. He died at Salerno; his last words were, *Dilexi justitiam et odivi iniquitatem; propterea morior in exilio.** And who will dare to charge with hypocrisy words uttered at the very gates of the tomb.

The successors of Gregory acted like soldiers arriving after a great victory. They threw themselves as conquerors on the unresisting Churches. Spain, delivered from the presence of Islamism, and Prussia, reclaimed from idolatry, fell into the embrace of the crowned priest. The crusades, undertaken at his instance, spread far and wide, and everywhere confirmed his authority:—the pious pilgrims, who in imagination had seen saints and angels conducting their armed hosts, and who entering humbly and barefooted within the walls of Jerusalem, had burned alive the Jews in their synagogue, and shed the blood of tens of thousands of Saracens on the spots where they came to trace the footsteps of the Prince of Peace, bore with them to

* I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity—therefore I die an exile.

the East the name of the Pope, whose existence had been scarcely known there, since the period when he exchanged the supremacy of the Greeks for that of the Franks.

Meanwhile that which the arms of the republic and of the empire had failed to effect, was achieved by the power of the Church. The Germans brought to the feet of a bishop the tribute their ancestors had refused to the mightiest generals; and their princes thought they received from the Popes their crown, while in reality the Popes imposed upon them a yoke. The kingdoms of Christendom, already subject to the spiritual empire of Rome, became her serfs and tributaries.

Thus every thing was changed in the Church.

At the beginning it was a society of brethren, and now an absolute monarchy is reared in the midst of them. All Christians were priests of the living God (1 Pet. ii. 9.), with humble pastors for their guidance. But a lofty head is uplifted from the midst of these pastors; a mysterious voice utters words full of pride; an iron hand compels all men, small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to take the mark of its power. The holy and primitive equality of souls before God is lost sight of. Christians are divided into two strangely unequal camps. On the one side a separate class of priests daring to usurp the name of the Church, and claiming to be possessed of peculiar privileges in the sight of the Lord. On the other, timid flocks reduced to a blind and passive submission; a people gagged and silenced and delivered over to a proud caste. Every tribe, language, and

nation of Christendom submitted to the dominion of this spiritual king who had received power to overcome.

But side by side with that principle that should have pervaded the history of Christianity was a principle that was given to preside over its doctrine. This was the great principle of Christianity; its leading idea—that of grace, of pardon, and amnesty, and of the gift of eternal life. This idea supposed an alienation from God, and an inability in man to enter, by any power of his own, into communion with an infinitely holy Being. The opposition of true and false doctrine cannot assuredly be entirely summed up in the question of salvation by faith or by works. Nevertheless, it is the most striking feature in the contrast. We may go farther: Salvation considered as derived from any power in man is the germinating principle of all errors and perversions. The scandals produced by this fundamental error brought on the Reformation;—and the profession of the contrary principle was the means by which it was achieved. It is therefore indispensable that this truth should be prominent in an introduction to the history of that Reformation.

Salvation by Grace. Such, then, was the second peculiarity which was designed especially to distinguish the religion that came from God from all human systems. And what had become of this great and primordial thought? Had the Church preserved it as a precious deposit? Let us follow its history.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, of Asia, of Greece,

and of Rome, in the time of the Roman Emperors, had heard this gospel. YE ARE SAVED BY GRACE—THROUGH FAITH—IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD;* and at this voice of peace, at the sound of these good tidings, at this word of power, multitudes of sinners believed, and were attracted to Him who alone can give peace to the conscience; and numerous *societies of believers* were formed in the midst of the degenerate communities of that age.

But ere long an important error began to prevail, as to the nature of Saving Faith.—Faith (according to St. Paul) is the way through which the whole being of the believer,—his understanding, his heart, and his will, enters upon present possession of the salvation purchased by the incarnation and death of the Son of God. Jesus Christ is apprehended by Faith, and from that hour becomes all things to,—and all things, in the believer. He communicates to the human nature a divine life; and the believer, renewed and set free from the power of self and of sin, feels new affections, and bears new fruits. Faith, says the theologian, labouring to express these thoughts, is the subjective appropriation of the objective Work of Christ. If Faith is not the appropriation of Salvation it is nothing—the whole economy of Christian doctrine is out of place; the fountains of the new life are sealed, and Christianity is overturned from its foundation.

And this consequence did in fact ensue. By degrees this practical view of Faith was forgotten, and ere long it was regarded, as it still is by many, as a bare act of the understanding, a mere submission to a commanding evidence.

* Eph. ii. 8.

From this primary error a second necessarily resulted. When Faith was robbed of its practical character it could no longer be maintained that Faith *alone* saved. Works no longer following in their place as its fruits—it seemed necessary to range them on one line with it; and the Church was taught to believe that the sinner is justified by FAITH *and* by WORKS. In place of that Christian unity in doctrine, which comprises in a single principle Justification and Works—Grace and a rule of life—belief and responsibility, succeeded that melancholy duality which regards religion and moral duty as things altogether unconnected; a fatal delusion which brings in death, by separating the body from the spirit, whose continued union is the necessary condition of life itself. The word of the Apostle heard across the interval of ages is, "Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

Another error contributed to unsettle the doctrine of Grace. This was Pelagianism. Pelagius asserted that man's nature was not fallen,—that there is no such thing as hereditary evil, and that man having received power to do good has only to will in order to perform it.* If the doing "good things" consists in certain external acts, Pelagius judged truly. But if regard is had to the motives whence these external acts proceed,—or to the entire inward life of man,† then we discern in all his works selfishness—forgetfulness of God,—pollution and weakness. This was the doctrine of St. Augustine. He proved that to

* Velle et esse ad hominem referenda sunt, quia de arbitrii fonte descendunt. (Pelag. in Aug. *de Gratia Dei*, cap. iv.)

† See Matt. xii. 34.

entitle any action to approval, it was needful not merely that it should seem right when looked at by itself and from the outside, but above all that its real spring in the soul should be holy. The Pelagian doctrine rejected by St. Augustine from the church when it presented itself broadly for investigation, reappeared ere long with a side aspect as semi-Pelagian, and under forms of expression borrowed from St. Augustine's own writings. It was in vain that eminent Father opposed its progress. He died soon after. The error spread with amazing rapidity throughout Christendom—passing from the West to the East, and even at this day it continues to disturb and harass the Church. The danger of the doctrine appeared in this: that by placing goodness in the external act rather than in the inward affections, it led men to put a high value upon outward action, legal observances, and works of penance. The more of such works the greater the reputed sanctity—heaven was to be obtained by means of them—and (extravagant as such a thought must appear to us) it was not long before certain persons were believed to have made attainments in holiness beyond that which was required of them.

Thus did the proud heart of man refuse to give the glory to that God to whom all glory belongs. Thus did man claim to deserve, what God had decreed to give freely! He essayed to find in himself the salvation which the Gospel brought to him ready wrought out from heaven. He spread a veil over the saving truth of a salvation which cometh from God, and not from man—a salvation which God gives—but barters not;—and from that day all the other

truths of religion were over-clouded: darkness spread over the church, and from this deep and deplorable gloom were seen to arise innumerable errors.

And in the first place we may observe that both great divisions of error converged to one effect. Pelagianism, while it corrupted the church's teaching, strengthened the hierarchy:—by the same influence by which it hid the doctrine of grace, it exalted the authority of the church—for *grace* was God's part in the work as *the Church* was man's!

As soon as salvation was taken out of the hands of God, it fell into the hands of the Priests. The latter put themselves in the place of the Lord; and the souls of men, thirsting for pardon, were no longer taught to look to heaven, but to the Church, and especially to its pretended Head. The Roman Pontiff was in the place of God to the blinded minds of men. Hence all the grandeur and authority of the Popes, and hence also unutterable abuses.

Doubtless the doctrine of salvation by Faith was not entirely lost to the Church. We meet with it in some of the most celebrated Fathers, after the time of Constantine; and in the middle ages. The doctrine was not formally denied. Councils and Popes did not hurl their bulls and decrees against it; but they set up beside it a something which nullified it. Salvation by Faith was received by many learned men, by many a humble and simple mind,—but the multitude had something very different. Men had invented a complete system of forgiveness. The multitude flocked to it and joined with it, rather than with the Grace of Christ; and thus the system of man's devising prevailed

over that of God. Let us examine some of the phases of this deplorable change.

In the time of Vespasian and his sons, he who had been the most intimate companion of the despised Galilean, one of the sons of Zebedee, had said: "If we confess our sins, God is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins."

About 120 years later, under Commodus, and Septimius Severus, Tertullian, an illustrious pastor of Carthage, speaking of pardon, already held a very different language. "It is necessary (said he), to change our dress and food, we must put on sackcloth and ashes, we must renounce all comfort and adorning of the body, and falling down before the priest, implore the intercession of the brethren."* Behold man turned aside from God, and turned back upon himself.

Works of penance, thus substituted for the salvation of God, multiplied in the Church from the time of Tertullian to the 13th century. Men were enjoined to fast, to go bare-headed, to wear no linen, &c. or required to leave home and country for distant lands, or else, to renounce the world and embrace a monastic life.

In the 11th century were added voluntary flagellations; a little after they became an absolute mania in Italy, which was then in a very disturbed state. Nobles and peasants, old and young, even children of five years old, went in pairs, through the villages, the towns, and the cities, by hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands, without any other covering than a cloth tied round the middle,

* Tertull. de Pœnit.

and visiting the churches in procession, in the very depth of winter. Armed with scourges, they lashed themselves without pity, and the streets resounded with cries and groans, which drew forth tears of compassion from all who heard them.

And yet long before the evil had arrived at this height, men sighed for deliverance from the tyranny of the priests. The priests themselves were sensible that if they did not devise some remedy, their usurped power would be at an end. Then it was that they invented the system of barter known by the name of indulgences. It is under John, surnamed the *Faster*, archbishop of Constantinople, that we see its first commencement. The priests said, "O penitents, you are unable to perform the penances we have imposed upon you. Well then, we, the priests of God, and your pastors, will take upon ourselves this heavy burden. Who can better fast than we? Who better kneel and recite psalms than ourselves?" But the labourer is worthy of his hire. "For a seven weeks fast, (said Regino, abbot of Prum,) such as are rich shall pay twenty pence, those who are less wealthy ten pence, and the poor three pence, and in the same proportion for other things."* Some courageous voices were raised against this traffic, but in vain!

The Pope soon discovered what advantages he might derive from these indulgences. His want of money continued to increase. Here was an easy resource, which, under the appearance of a voluntary contribution, would replenish his coffers. It seemed desirable to establish so lucrative a discovery

* Libri duo de ecclesiasticis disciplinis.

on a solid footing. The chief men of Rome exerted themselves for this purpose. The irrefragable doctor, Alexander de Hales, invented, in the 13th century, a doctrine well suited to secure this mighty resource to the Papacy. A bull of Clement VII. declared the new doctrine an article of the faith. The most sacred truths were made to subserve this persevering policy of Rome. Christ, it was affirmed, has done much more than was required for reconciling God and man. One single drop of his blood would have sufficed for that; but he shed his blood abundantly, that he might form for his church *a treasury* that eternity itself should never exhaust. The supererogatory merits of the saints, the reward of the works they have done, beyond and additional to the obligations of duty, have still further enriched this treasury. Its guardianship and distribution are confided to the Vicar of Christ upon earth. He applies to every sinner, for sins committed after baptism, these merits of Christ and of his saints, in the measure and degree that his sins have made necessary. Who would dare to attack a custom of so high and holy an origin?

Rapidly was this almost inconceivable invention reduced to a system. The scale imposed ten, twenty years of penance, for such and such kinds of sin. "It is not merely for each kind of sin, but for each "sinful action, that this penance of so many years "is demanded," exclaimed the mercenary priests. Behold mankind, bowed down under the weight of a penance that seemed almost eternal.

"But for what purpose this long penance, when life "is so short—when can it take effect? How can man

" secure the time requisite for its performance? You " are imposing on him centuries of severe discipline. " When death comes he will but laugh at you—for " death will discharge him from his burthen. Ah, " welcome death!" But this objection was provided against. The philosophers of Alexandria had spoken of a fire in which men were to be purified. Some ancient doctors in the church had received the notion. Rome declared this philosophic tenet the doctrine of the church; and the Pope, by a bull, added *purgatory* to his domain. He declared that man would have to expiate in purgatory all he could not expiate on earth; but that indulgences would deliver men's souls from that intermediate state in which their sins would otherwise hold them. Thomas Aquinas set forth this new doctrine in his celebrated *Summa*. Nothing was left undone to fill the mind with terror. Man is by nature inclined to fear an unknown futurity and the dark abodes beyond the grave; but that fear was artfully excited and increased by horrible descriptions of the torments of this purifying fire. We see at this day in many Catholic countries paintings exposed in the temples, or in the crossways, wherein poor souls engulphed in flames invoke alleviation for their miseries. Who could refuse the money that, dropt into the treasury of Rome, redeemed the soul from such horrible torments?

But a further means of increasing this traffic was now discovered. Hitherto it had been the sins of the living that had been turned to profit; they now began to avail themselves of the sins of the dead. In the 13th century it was declared

that the living might, by making certain sacrifices, shorten or even terminate the torments their ancestors and friends were enduring in purgatory. Instantly the compassionate hearts of the faithful offered new treasures for the priests.

To regulate this traffic, they invented shortly after, probably in the pontificate of John XXII. the celebrated and scandalous tax of indulgences, of which more than forty editions are extant: a mind of the least delicacy would be shocked at the repetition of the horrors therein contained. Incest was to cost, if not detected, five groschen, if known, or flagrant, six. A certain price was affixed to the crime of murder, another to infanticide, adultery, perjury, burglary, &c. Oh, shame of Rome! exclaims Claudius of Espersa, a Roman divine; and we may add, Oh, shame to human nature! For no reproach can attach to Rome which does not recoil with equal force on mankind in general. Rome is human nature exalted, and displaying some of its worst propensities. We say this in truth as well as in justice.

Boniface VIII., the boldest and most ambitious of the Popes, after Gregory VII., effected still more than his predecessors had done.

He published a bull in 1300, by which he declared to the church that all who should at that time or thenceforth make the pilgrimage to Rome, which should take place every hundred years, should there receive a plenary indulgence. Upon this multitudes flocked from Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, France, Spain, Germany, Hungary, and other quarters. Old men, of sixty and seventy, set out on

the pilgrimage ; and it was computed that 200,000 visited Rome in one month. All these foreigners brought with them rich offerings, and the Pope and the Romans saw their coffers replenished.

The avarice of the Pontiffs soon fixed this jubilee at intervals of fifty years, afterwards at thirty-three years, and at last at twenty-five. Then, for the greater convenience of the purchasers, and to increase the profits of the vendors; they transferred both the jubilee and its indulgences from Rome to the market-places of all the nations of Christendom. It was no longer necessary to abandon one's home : what others had been obliged to seek beyond the Alps, each might now obtain at his own door.

The evil was at its height,—and then the Reformer arose.

We have seen what had become of the principle which was designed to govern the history of Christianity ; we have also seen what became of that which should have pervaded its doctrine. Both were now lost.

To set up a single caste as mediators between God and man, and to barter in exchange for works, and penances, and gold, the salvation freely given by God ;—such was Popery.

To open wide to all, through Christ Jesus, and without any earthly mediator, and without that power that called itself the Church, free access to the gift of God, *eternal life* ;—such was Christianity, and such was the Reformation.

Popery may be compared to a high wall erected by the labour of ages, between man and God. Who-

ever will scale it must pay or suffer in the attempt; and even then he will fail to overleap it.

The Reformation is the power which has thrown down this wall, has restored Christ to man, and has thus made plain the way of access to the Creator.

Popery interposes the Church between God and man.

Christianity and the Reformation bring God and man face to face.

Popery separates man from God:—the Gospel re-unites them.

After having thus traced the history of the decline and loss of the two grand principles which were to distinguish the religion of God from systems of man's devising, let us see what were the consequences of this immense change.

But first let us do honour to the church of that middle period, which intervened between the age of the Apostles and the Reformers. The church was still the church, although fallen and more and more enslaved. In a word, she was at all times the most powerful friend of man. Her hands, though manacled, still dispensed blessings. Many eminent servants of Christ diffused during these ages a beneficent light; and in the humble convent—the sequestered parish—there were found poor monks and poor priests to alleviate bitter sufferings. The church *Catholic* was not the Papacy. This filled the place of the oppressor; that of the oppressed. The Reformation, which declared war against the one, came to liberate the other. And it must be acknowledged, that the Papacy itself was at times,

in the hands of Him who brings good out of evil, a necessary counterpoise to the ambition and tyranny of princes.

Let us now contemplate the condition of Christianity at that time.

Theology and religion were then widely different. The doctrine of the learned, and the practice of priests, monks, and people, presented two very different aspects. They had, however, great influence upon each other, and the Reformation had to deal with both. Let us examine them, and take a survey first of the Schools, or Theology.

Theology was still under the influence of the middle ages. The middle ages had awoke from their long trance, and had produced many learned men. But their learning had been directed neither to the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, nor to the examination of the history of the Church. Scriptural exposition, and the study of history, the two great sources of theological knowledge, still slumbered.

A new science had usurped their place. It was the science of Dialectics. The art of reasoning became the fruitful mine of a new theology. The middle ages had discovered the long lost writings of Aristotle. Their knowledge of him was derived either from old Latin versions, or from translations from the Arabic. The resuscitated Aristotle appeared in the West as a giant, subjecting the minds, and even the consciences of men. His philosophic method added strength to the disposition for dialectics which marked the age. It was a method well suited to subtle researches and trivial distinctions,

The very obscurity of the translations of the Greek philosopher favoured the dialectic subtlety which had captivated the West. The Church, alarmed at its progress, for a while opposed this new tendency. She feared that this taste for discussion might engender heresies. But the dialectic philosophy proved to be easily compounded with ; monks employed it against heretics, and thenceforward its victory was secure.

It was the characteristic of this method of teaching, to suggest numerous questions on every branch of theology, and then to decide them by a solution. Often these inquiries turned upon the most useless matters. It was asked whether all animals had been enclosed in Noah's ark ; and whether a dead man could say mass,* &c. But we should be wrong to form our judgment of the scholastic divines from such examples only. On the contrary, we must often acknowledge the depth and extent of their inquiries.

Some among them made a distinction between theological and philosophical truth, affirming that a proposition might be theologically true, and philosophically false. In this way it was hoped to reconcile incredulity with a cold and dead adherence to the forms of the church. But there were others, and Thomas Aquinas at their head, who maintained that the doctrine of revelation was in no respect at variance with an enlightened reason ; and that even as Christian charity does not annihilate the natural affections, but chastens, sanctifies,

* Hottinger Hist. Eccles. V.

ennobles, and governs them, so Faith does not destroy Philosophy, but may make use of it by sanctifying and illuminating it with its own light.

The doctrine of the Trinity opened a wide field for the dialectic method of the theologians. By dint of distinctions and disputes, they fell into contrary errors. Some distinguished the three Persons so as to make of them three Gods. This was the error of Roscelin of Compeigne and his followers. Others confounded the Persons so as to leave only an ideal distinction. This was the case with Gilbert of Poictiers and his adherents. But the orthodox doctrine was ably maintained by others.

The dialectic subtlety of the times was not less directed to the article of the Divine Will. How are we to reconcile the will of God with his almighty power and holiness? The scholastic divines found in this question numerous difficulties, and laboured to remove them by dialectic distinctions. "We cannot say that God wills the existence of *evil*," said Peter the Lombard, "but neither can we say that He wills that evil should not exist."

The majority of these theologians sought to weaken by their dialectic labours the doctrine of Predestination which they found in the church. Alexander de Hales availed himself for this purpose of the following distinction of Aristotle; that every action supposes two parties, namely, an agent, and the thing subjected to the action. Divine Predestination, said he, acts doubtless for man's salvation; but it is requisite that it find in the soul of man a capacity for the reception of this grace.

Without this second party the first cannot *effect* any thing; and Predestination consists in this, that God knowing by his prescience those in whom this second requisite will be found, has appointed to give them his grace.

As to the original condition of man, these theologians distinguished natural gifts and free gifts. The first they held to consist in the primitive purity and strength of the human soul. The second were the gifts of God's grace that the soul might accomplish good works. But here again the learned were divided; some contended that man had originally possessed only natural gifts, and had by his use of them to merit those of grace. But Thomas Aquinas, who was generally on the side of sound doctrine, affirmed that the gifts of grace had from the beginning been closely united with the gifts of nature, because the first man was perfect in his moral health. The Fall, said the former, who leaned towards Free-will, has deprived man of the gifts of grace, but it has not entirely stripped him of the primitive strength of his nature; for the least sanctification would have been impossible if there had been no longer with him any moral strength. Whilst, on the other side, the stricter theologians thought that the Fall had not only deprived man of grace, but corrupted his nature.

All acknowledged the work of Reconciliation wrought out by Christ's sufferings and death. But some maintained that redemption could have been effected in no other way than by the expiatory satisfaction of the death of Jesus Christ, whilst others laboured to prove that God had simply

attached redemption and grace to this price. Others again, and among these last we may particularize Abelard, made the saving efficacy of redemption to consist merely in its fitness to awaken in man's heart a confidence and love toward God.

The doctrine of Sanctification or of Grace discovers to us in fresh abundance the dialectic subtlety of these divines. All of them, accepting the distinction of Aristotle already mentioned, laid down the necessity of the existence in man of a *materia disposita*, a something disposed to the reception of grace. But Thomas Aquinas ascribes this disposition to grace itself. Grace, said they, was *formative* for man before the Fall; now, that there is in him something to extirpate, it is grace *reformative*. And a farther distinction was laid down between grace given gratuitously, *gratia gratis data*, and grace that makes acceptable, *gratia gratum faciens*; with many other similar distinctions.

The doctrince of penance and indulgence, which we have already exhibited, crowned the whole of this system, and ruined whatever good it might contain. Peter the Lombard had been the first to distinguish three sorts of penitence; that of the heart or compunction; that of the lips, or confession; that of works, or satisfaction by outward action. He distinguished, indeed, absolution in the sight of God from absolution before the church. He even affirmed that inward repentance sufficed to obtain the pardon of sins. But he found a way back into the error of the church through another channel. He allowed that for sins committed after baptism, it was necessary either to endure the fires

of purgatory, or to submit to the ecclesiastic penance; excepting only the sinner whose inward repentance and remorse should be so great as to obviate the necessity of further sufferings. He proceeds to propose questions which, with all his skill in dialectics, he is embarrassed to resolve. If two men, equal in their spiritual condition, but one poor and the other rich, die the same day, the one having no other succours than the ordinary prayers of the church, while for the other many masses can be said, and many works of charity can be done, what will be the event? The scholastic divine turns on all sides for an answer, and concludes by saying, that they will have the like fate, but not by the like causes. The rich man's deliverance from purgatory will not be more perfect, but it will be earlier.

We have given a few sketches of the sort of Theology which reigned in the schools at the period of the Reformation. Distinctions, ideas, sometimes just, sometimes false, but still mere notions. The Christian doctrine had lost that odour of heaven, that force and practical vitality which came from God, and which had characterized it as it existed in the apostolic age: and these were destined again to come to it *from above.*

Meanwhile the learning of the schools was pure when compared with the actual condition of the Church. The theology of the learned might be said to flourish, if contrasted with the religion, the morals, the instruction of the priests, monks, and people. If Science stood in need of a revival, the Church was in still greater need of a Reformation.

The people of Christendom, and under that designation almost all the nations of Europe might be comprised, no longer looked to a living and holy God for the free gift of eternal life. They therefore naturally had recourse to all the devices of a superstitious, fearful, and alarmed imagination. Heaven was peopled with saints and mediators, whose office it was to solicit God's mercy. All lands were filled with the works of piety, of mortification, of penance and observances, by which it was to be procured. Take the description of the state of religion at this period given by one who was for a long while a monk, and in after life a fellow-labourer with Luther,—Myconius.

"The sufferings and merits of Christ were looked upon (says he), as an empty tale, or as the fictions of Homer. There was no longer any thought of that faith by which we are made partakers of the Saviour's righteousness, and the inheritance of eternal life. Christ was regarded as a stern judge, prepared to condemn all who should not have recourse to the intercession of saints or to the Pope's indulgences. Other intercessors were substituted in his stead; first the Virgin Mary, like the heathen Diana; and then the saints, whose numbers were continually augmented by the Popes. These intercessors refused their mediation unless the party was in good repute with the monastic orders which they had founded. To be so, it was necessary not only to do what God had commanded in his word, but also to perform a number of works invented by the monks and the priests, and which

brought them in large sums of money. Such were Ave Marias, the prayers of St. Ursula, and of St. Bridget. It was necessary to chaunt and cry day and night. There were as many different pilgrimages as there were mountains, forests, and valleys. But with money these penances might be compounded for. The people therefore brought to the convents and to the priests money, and every thing they possessed that was of any value, fowls, ducks, eggs, wax, straw, butter, and cheese. Then the chauntings resounded, the bells rang, the odour of incense filled the sanctuary, the sacrifices were offered up, the tables groaned, the glasses circulated, and these pious orgies were terminated by masses. The bishops no longer appeared in the pulpits, but they consecrated priests, monks, churches, chapels, images, books, and burial places, and all these brought a large revenue. Bones, arms, feet, were preserved in boxes of silver or gold; they gave them to the faithful to kiss during mass, and this increased their gains.

"All maintained that the Pope being in the place of God* could not err; and there were none to contradict them."†

At the church of All Saints, at Wittemberg, was shewn a fragment of Noah's ark; some soot from the furnace of the three children; a piece of wood from the crib of the infant Jesus; some hair of the beard of the great St. Christopher; and nineteen thousand other relics, more or less precious.

* 2 Thessal. ii. 4.

† Myconius' History of the Reformation; and Seckendorf's Hist. of Lutheranism.

At Schaffhausen was shewn the breath of St. Joseph, that Nicodemus received on his glove. In Wurtemberg, might be seen a seller of indulgences disposing of his merchandise with his head adorned with a feather plucked from the wing of the Archangel Michael.* But there was no need to seek so far for these precious treasures. Those who *farmed* the relics overran the country. They bore them about in the rural districts, (as has since been done with the Holy Scriptures;) and carried them into the houses of the faithful, to spare them the cost and trouble of the pilgrimage. They were exhibited with pomp in the churches. These wandering hawkers paid a certain sum to the proprietors of the relics, with a per centage on their profits. The kingdom of heaven had disappeared; and men had opened in its place on earth, a market of abominations.

At the same time, a profane spirit had invaded religion, and the most solemn recollections of the Church; the seasons which seemed most to summon the faithful to devout reflection and love, were dishonoured by buffoonery and profanations altogether heathenish. The *Humours* of Easter held a large place in the annals of the Church. The festival of the Resurrection claiming to be joyfully commemorated, preachers went out of their way to put into their sermons whatever might excite the laughter of the people. One preacher imitated the cuckoo; another hissed like a goose; one dragged to the altar a layman dressed in a monk's cowl; a second related the grossest indecencies; a third recounted

* Müller Reliquien, vol. iii. p. 22.

the tricks of the Apostle St. Peter,—among others, how, at an inn, he cheated the host, by not paying his reckoning.* The lower orders of the clergy followed the example, and turned their superiors into ridicule. The very temples were converted into a stage, and the priests into mountebanks.

If this was the state of religion, what must have been the morals of the age?

Doubtless the corruption was not universal.—Justice requires that this should not be forgotten. The Reformation elicited many shining instances of piety, righteousness, and strength of mind. The spontaneous power of God was the cause; but how can we doubt that by the same power the germs of this new life had been deposited long before in the bosom of the church. If, in these our days, any one were to collect the immoralities and degrading vices that are committed in any single country, such a mass of corruption would doubtless be enough to shock every mind. But the evil, at the period we speak of, bore a character and universality that it has not borne at any subsequent date; and above all, the abomination stood in the holy places, which it has not been permitted to do since the Reformation.

Moral conduct had declined with the life of faith. The tidings of the gift of eternal life is the power of God to regenerate men. Once take away the salvation which is God's gift, and you take away sanctification and good works:—and this was the result.

The proclamation and sale of indulgences power-

* Œcolamp. de risu paschali.

fully stimulated an ignorant people to immorality. It is true that, according to the Church, they could benefit those only who made and kept a promise of amendment. But what could be expected from a doctrine invented with a view to the profit to be gained from it? The vendors of indulgences were naturally tempted to further the sale of their merchandise by presenting them to the people under the most attractive and seducing aspect; even the better instructed did not fully comprehend the doctrine in respect to them. All that the multitude saw in them was a permission to sin; and the sellers were in no haste to remove an impression so favourable to the sale.

What disorders, what crimes, in these ages of darkness, in which impunity was acquired by money! What might not be feared when a small contribution to the building of a church was supposed to deliver from the punishments of a future world! What hope of revival when the communication between God and man was at an end; and man, afar off from God, who is spirit and life,—moved only in a circle of pitiful ceremonies and gross practices,—in an atmosphere of death.

The priests were the first who felt the effects of this corrupting influence. Desiring to exalt themselves they had sunk themselves lower. Infatuated men! They aimed to rob God of a ray of his glory, and to place it on their own brows; but their attempt had failed, and they had received only a leaven of corruption from the power of evil. The annals of the age swarm with scandals. In many places the people were well-pleased that the priest

should have a woman in keeping, that their wives might be safe from his seductions.* What scenes of humiliation were witnessed in the house of the pastor. The wretched man supported the mother and her children, with the tithe and the offering ;† his conscience was troubled ; he blushed in presence of his people, of his servants, and before God. The mother, fearing to come to want when the priest should die, provided against it beforehand, and robbed the house. Her character was gone : her children were a living accusation of her. Treated on all sides with contempt, they plunged into brawls and debaucheries. Such was the family of the priest. These horrid scenes were a kind of instruction that the people were ready enough to follow.‡

The rural districts were the scene of numerous excesses. The abodes of the clergy were frequently the resorts of the dissolute. Cornelius Adrian, at Bruges,§ the Abbot Trinkler, at Cappel,‖ imitated the customs of the East, and had their harems. Priests, consorted with abandoned characters, frequented the taverns, played dice, and finished their orgies by quarrels and blasphemy.¶

The council of Schaffhausen prohibited the clergy from dancing in public except at weddings ; from carrying two kinds of weapons ; and decreed that a priest who should be found in a house of ill-fame

* Nicol. De Clemangis de præsulib. simoniacis.

† The words of Seb. Stor, pastor of Lichstall in 1524.

‡ Füsslin Beyträge, ii. 224. § Metern. Nederl. hist. viii.

‖ Hottinger, Hist. Eccles. ix. 305.

¶ Mandement de Hugo evêque de Constance, Mar. 3, 1517.

should be stripped of his ecclesiastical habit.* In the archbishopric of Mentz they scaled the walls in the night, committed disturbances and disorders of all kinds in the inns and taverns, and broke open doors and locks.† In several places the priest paid to the bishop a regular tax for the woman with whom he lived, and for every child he had by her. A German bishop who was present at a grand entertainment, publicly declared that in one year eleven thousand priests had presented themselves to him for that purpose. It is Erasmus who records this.‡

The higher orders of the hierarchy were equally corrupt. Dignitaries of the Church preferred the tumult of camps to the service of the altar. To be able, lance in hand, to compel his neighbours to do him homage, was one of the most conspicuous qualifications of a bishop. Baldwin, archbishop of Treves, was constantly at war with his neighbours and vassals; razing their castles, building fortresses of his own, and thinking only how to enlarge his territory. A certain bishop of Eichstadt, when dispensing justice, wore under his habit a coat of mail, and held in his hand a long sword. He used to say he did not fear five Bavarians, provided they would but attack him in the open field.§ Every where the bishops were engaged in constant war with the towns; the citizens demanding freedom, and the bishops requiring implicit obedience.

* Müller's Reliq. iii. 251.

† Steubing Gesch. der Nass. Oran. Lande.

‡ Uno anno ad se delata undecim millia sacerdotum palam concubinariorum.—Erasmi Op. tom. ix. p. 401. (This citation has been verified—yet there seems to be some mistake in these figures. *Tr.*)

§ Schmidt Gesch. der Deutschen. tom. iv.

If the latter triumphed, they punished the revolters, by sacrificing numerous victims to their vengeance; but the flame of insurrection broke out again at the very moment when it was thought to be extinguished.

And what a spectacle was presented by the Pontifical Throne in the generation immediately preceding the Reformation! Rome, it must be acknowledged, has seldom been witness to so much infamy.

Rodrigo Borgia, after living in illicit intercourse with a Roman lady, had continued a similar connection with one of her daughters, by name Rosa Vanozza, by whom he had had five children. He was living at Rome with Vanozza and other abandoned women,—as cardinal, and archbishop, visiting the churches and hospitals,—when the death of Innocent VIII. created a vacancy in the Pontifical chair. He succeeded in obtaining it by bribing each of the cardinals at a stipulated price. Four mules, laden with silver, were publicly driven into the palace of Sforza, the most influential of the cardinals. Borgia became Pope under the name of Alexander VI. and rejoiced in the attainment of the pinnacle of pleasures.

The very day of his coronation he created his son Cæsar, a ferocious and dissolute youth, archbishop of Valencia and bishop of Pampeluna. He next proceeded to celebrate in the Vatican the nuptials of his daughter Lucrezia, by festivities, at which his mistress Julia Bella was present, and which were enlivened by farces and indecent songs. "Most of the ecclesiastics," says an historian,* "had

* Infessura.

their mistresses, and all the convents of the capital were houses of ill fame." Cæsar Borgia espoused the cause of the Guelphs, and when by their assistance he had annihilated the power of the Ghibelines, he turned upon the Guelphs, and crushed them in their turn. But he would allow none to share in the spoils of his atrocities. In the year 1497, Alexander conferred upon his eldest son the duchy of Benevento. The Duke suddenly disappeared. That night a faggot-dealer on the banks of the Tiber saw some persons throw a corpse into the river; but he said nothing of it, for such things were common. The Duke's body was found. His brother Cæsar had been the instigator of the murder.* He did not stop there. His brother-in-law stood in the way of his ambition. One day Cæsar caused him to be stabbed on the staircase of the Pope's palace, and he was carried covered with blood to his own apartments. His wife and sister never left him. Dreading lest Cæsar should employ poison, they were accustomed to prepare his meals with their own hands. Alexander placed guards before his door,—but Cæsar ridiculed these precautions, and on one occasion when the Pope visited him dropped the remark, "What cannot be done at *dinner* may be at *supper*." Accordingly, he one day gained admittance to the chamber of the wounded man, turned out his wife and sister, and calling Michilotto, the executioner of his horrors, and the only man in whom

* Amazzò il fratello ducha di Gandia e lo fa butar nel Tevere. (M. S. C. of Capello, ambassador at Rome in 1500—extracted by Rancke.)

he placed any confidence, commanded him to strangle his victim before his eyes. Alexander had a favourite named Peroto, whose preferment offended the young Duke. Cæsar rushed upon him,—Peroto sought refuge under the Papal mantle, clasping the Pontiff in his arms;—Cæsar stabbed him, and the blood of the victim spirted in the Pontiff's face. "The Pope," adds a contemporary and witness of these atrocities,—"loves the Duke his son, and lives in great fear of him." Cæsar was one of the handsomest and most powerful men of his age. Six wild bulls fell beneath his hand in single combat. Nightly assassinations took place in the streets of Rome. Poison often destroyed those whom the dagger could not reach. Every one feared to move or breathe lest he should be the next victim. Cæsar Borgia was the hero of crime. The spot on earth where all iniquity met and overflowed was the Pontiff's seat. When man has given himself over to the power of evil,—the higher his pretensions before God, the lower he is seen to sink in the depths of hell. The dissolute entertainments given by the Pope and his son Cæsar and his daughter Lucrezia, are such as can neither be described nor thought of. The most impure groves of ancient worship saw not the like. Historians have accused Alexander and Lucrezia of incest, but the charge is not sufficiently established. The Pope, in order to rid himself of a wealthy Cardinal, had prepared poison in a small box of sweetmeats, which was to be placed on table after a sumptuous feast: the Cardinal, receiving a hint of the design, gained over the attendant, and the poisoned box was placed before Alex-

ander. He ate of it and perished. The whole city came together, and could hardly satiate themselves with the sight of this dead viper.*

Such was the man who filled the pontifical throne at the commencement of the age of the Reformation.

Thus the clergy had disgraced religion and themselves. Well might a powerful voice exclaim, "The ecclesiastic order is opposed to God and to his glory. The people well know it; and it is but too evident, from the many songs, proverbs, and jests on the priests, current amongst the common people, as also from the figures of monks and priests scrawled on the walls, and even on the playing cards, that every one has a feeling of disgust at the sight or name of a priest." It is Luther who thus speaks.†

The evil had spread through all ranks; a spirit of delusion had been sent among men; the corruption of morals corresponded to the corruption of the faith; the mystery of iniquity weighed down the enslaved Church of Christ.

Another consequence necessarily ensued from the neglect into which the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel had fallen. From the darkness of the understanding resulted the corruption of the heart. The priests having taken into their own hands the dispensing a salvation which belonged only to God, had thereby secured a sufficient hold on the respect of the people. What need had they to study sacred learning? It was no longer their office to explain

* Gordon, Tommâsi, Infessura, Guicciardini, Eccard, &c.

† Letter to the Cardinal-Elector of Mentz, 1525.

the Scriptures, but to grant letters of indulgence; and for the fulfilling of that ministry, it was unnecessary to have acquired any great learning.

In country parts, says Wimpheling, they appointed as preachers poor wretches whom they had taken from beggary, and who had been cooks, musicians, huntsmen, stable boys, and even worse.*

The superior clergy themselves were sunk in great ignorance. A bishop of Dunfeldt congratulated himself on never having learned Greek or Hebrew. The monks asserted that all heresies arose from these languages, but especially from the Greek. "The New Testament," said one of them, "is a book full of serpents and thorns. Greek," continued he, "is a modern language, but recently invented, and against which we must be upon our guard. As to Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that whoever studies *that* immediately becomes a Jew." Heresbach, a friend of Erasmus, and a respectable writer, reports these very words. Thomas Linacer, a learned and celebrated divine, had never read the New Testament. Drawing near his end (in 1524) he called for it, but quickly threw it from him with an oath, because his eye had caught the words, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all." "Either this is not the Gospel," said he, "or we are not Christians." Even the school of theology in Paris did not scruple to declare before the Parliament, "There is an end of religion if the study of Hebrew and Greek is permitted."†

If here and there among the clergy some learning

* Apologia pro Rep. Christ.

† Müller's Reliq. tom. 3. p. 253.

existed, it was not in sacred literature. The Ciceronians of Italy affected a great contempt for the Bible on account of its style: men who arrogated to themselves the title of Priests of Christ's Church translated the words of the Holy Ghost into the style of Virgil and of Horace, to accommodate them to the ears of men of taste. The Cardinal Bembo wrote always, instead of the *Holy Spirit*, "the breath of the celestial zephyr;" for *remission of sins* he substituted the "pity of the Manes and of the Gods;" and instead of *Christ the Son of God*, "Minerva sprung from the brows of Jupiter." Finding one day the respectable Sadoletus employed on a translation of the Epistle to the Romans, "Leave these childish productions," said he, "such puerilities do not become a sensible man."*

Behold some of the consequences of the system that then weighed down Christendom. This picture no doubt exhibits in strong colours both the corruption of the Church and the need of reformation. It is for that reason we have sketched it. The vital doctrines of Christianity had almost disappeared, and with them the life and light which constitute the essence of true religion. The internal strength of the Church was gone, and its lifeless and exhausted frame lay stretched over the Roman world.

Who shall give it new life? Whence shall we look for a remedy for so many evils?

For ages a reformation in the church had been loudly called for, and all the powers of this world had attempted it. But God alone could bring it to

* Felleri Monum. ined. p. 400.

pass. And he began by humbling the power of man that he might exhibit man's helplessness. We see human assailants, one after another, fail and break to pieces at the feet of the Colossus they undertook to cast down.

First temporal princes resisted Rome. The whole power of the Hohenstaufens, heroes who wore the Imperial crown, seemed directed to humble and reform Rome, and deliver the nations, and especially Germany, from her tyranny. But the castle of Canossa gave proof of the weakness of the Imperial power against the usurped dominion of the Church. A warlike prince, the Emperor Henry IV., after a long and fruitless struggle against Rome, was reduced to pass three days and nights in the trenches of that Italian fortress, exposed to the winter's cold, stripped of his imperial robes, barefoot, in a scanty woollen garment, imploring with tears and cries the pity of Hildebrand, before whom he kneeled; and who, after three nights of lamentation, relaxed his papal inflexibility, and pardoned the suppliant.* Behold the power of the high and mighty of the earth, of kings and emperors against Rome!

* Pope Hildebrand himself relates the event in these words: "Tandem rex ad oppidum Canusii, in quo morati sumus, cum paucis advenit, ibique per triduum ante portam, deposito omni regio cultu, miserabiliter utpote discalceatus et laniis inductus, persistens, non prius cum multo fletu apostolicæ miserationis auxilium et consolationem implorare destitit quam omnes qui ibi aderant ad tantam pietatem et compassionis misericordiam movit ut, pro eo multis precibus et lacrymis intercedentes, omnes quidem insolitam nostræ mentis duritiam mirarentur, nonnulli vero non apostolicæ severitatis gravitatem sed quasi tyrannicæ feritatis credulitatem esse clamarent." (Lib. iv. ep. 12. ad Germanos.)

To them succeeded adversaries perhaps more formidable,—men of genius and learning. Learning awoke in Italy, and its awakening was with an energetic protest against the Papacy. Dante, the father of Italian poetry, boldly placed in his *Hell* the most powerful of the Popes; he introduced St. Peter in heaven pronouncing stern and crushing censures on his unworthy successors, and drew horrible descriptions of the monks and clergy. Petrarch, that eminent genius, of a mind so superior to all the emperors and popes of his time, boldly called for the re-establishment of the primitive order of the Church. For this purpose he invoked the efforts of the age and the power of the emperor Charles IV. Laurentius Valla, one of the most learned men of Italy, attacked with spirit the pretensions of the Popes, and their asserted inheritance from Constantine. A legion of poets, learned men, and philosophers, followed in their track; the torch of learning was every where kindled, and threatened to reduce to ashes the Romish scaffolding that intercepted its beams. But every effort failed; Pope Leo X. enlisted among the supporters and satellites of his court,—literature, poetry, sciences and arts; and these came humbly kissing the feet of a power that in their boastful infancy they had attempted to dethrone. Behold the power of letters and philosophy against Rome!

At last an agency which promised more ability to reform the church, came forward. This was the Church itself. At the call for Reformation, reiterated on all sides, and which had been heard for ages past, that most imposing of ecclesiastical con-

claves, the Council of Constance, assembled. An immense number of cardinals, archbishops, bishops, eighteen hundred doctors of divinity and priests; the Emperor himself, with a retinue of a thousand persons; the Elector of Saxony, the Elector Palatine, the Dukes of Bavaria and Austria, and ambassadors from all nations, gave to this assembly an air of authority unprecedented in the history of Christianity. Above the rest, we must mention the illustrious and immortal doctors of the University of Paris, the Aillys, the Gersons, the Clemagnis,—those men of piety, learning, and courage, who by their writings and eloquence communicated to the Council an energetic and salutary direction. Every thing bowed before this assembly; with one hand it deposed three Popes at once, while with the other it delivered John Huss to the flames. A commission was named, composed of deputies from different nations, to propose a fundamental reform. The Emperor Sigismund supported the proposition with the whole weight of his power. The Council were unanimous. The cardinals all took an oath that he among them who should be elected Pope would not dissolve the assembly, nor leave Constance before the desired reformation should be accomplished. Colonna was chosen under the name of Martin V. The moment was come which was to decide the Reform of the Church; all the prelates, the Emperor, the princes, and the representatives of different nations, awaited the event with intense desire. "*The Council is at an end,*" exclaimed Martin V. as soon as he had placed the tiara on his brow. Sigismund and the clergy uttered a cry of

surprise, indignation, and grief; but that cry was lost upon the winds. On the 16th of May, 1418, the Pope, arrayed in the pontifical garments, mounted a mule richly caparisoned; the Emperor was on his right hand, the Elector of Brandeburgh on his left, each holding the reins of his palfrey; four counts supported over the Pope's head a magnificent canopy; several princes surrounded him bearing the trappings; and a mounted train of forty thousand persons, says an historian, composed of nobles, knights, and clergy of all ranks, joined in the solemn procession outside the walls of Constance. Then indeed did ROME, in the person of her pontiff sitting on a mule, inwardly deride the superstition that surrounded her; then did she give proof that to humble her a power must be exerted far different from any thing that could be put in motion by emperors, or kings, or bishops, or doctors of divinity, or all the learning of the age and of the church.

How could the Reformation proceed from the very thing to be reformed? How could the wound find in itself the elements of its cure?

Nevertheless the means employed to reform the Church, and which the result showed to be inefficacious, contributed to weaken the obstacles, and prepared the ground for the Reformers.

The evils which then afflicted Christendom, namely, superstition, incredulity, ignorance, unprofitable speculation, and corruption of morals,—evils naturally engendered in the hearts of men,—were not new on the earth. They had made a great figure in the history of nations. They had invaded, especially in the East, different religious systems,

which had seen their times of glory. Those enervated systems had sunk under these evils, and not one of them had ever arisen from its fall.

And was Christianity now to undergo the same destiny? Was it to be lost like those old religions of the nations? Was the blow that had doomed them to death to be of power to destroy it? Was there nothing to secure its preservation! And these opposing forces which overflowed it, and which had already dethroned so many various systems of worship, were they indeed to have power to seat themselves without resistance on the ruins of the Church of Jesus Christ?

No:—there is in Christianity that which there was not in any of these national systems. It does not, like them, offer certain general ideas, mixed with tradition and fables, destined, sooner or later, to fall before the march of human reason; but it contains within it pure Truth, built upon facts which challenge the scrutiny of any upright and enlightened mind. Christianity has for its object not merely to excite in man certain vague religious feelings, of which the impression, once forgotten, can never be revived; its object is to satisfy, and it does in reality satisfy, all the religious wants of human nature, in whatever degree that nature may be developed. It is not the contrivance of man, whose works pass away and are forgotten, but it is the work of God, who upholds what he creates; and it has the promises of its Divine Author for the pledge of its duration.

It is impossible that human nature can ever be above the need of Christianity. And if ever man

has for a time fancied that he could do without it, it has soon appeared to him clothed in fresh youth and vigour, as the only cure for the human soul; and the degenerate nations have returned with new ardour to those ancient, simple, and powerful truths, which in the hour of their infatuation they despised.

In fact, Christianity displayed, in the 16th century, the same regenerative power which it had exercised in the first. After the lapse of fifteen hundred years, the same truths produced the same effects. In the days of the Reformation, as in the days of Peter and Paul,—the Gospel, with invincible energy, overcame mighty obstacles. The efficacy of its sovereign power was displayed from north to south; amidst nations differing most widely in manners, in character, and in civilization. Then, as in the times of Stephen and of James, it kindled the fire of enthusiasm and devotion in the midst of the general deadness, and raised on all sides the spirit of martyrs.

How was this revival in the Church and in the world brought to pass?

An observant mind might then have discerned two laws by which God governs the course of events.

He first prepares slowly and from afar that which he designs to accomplish. He has ages in which to work.

Then, when his time is come, he effects the greatest results by the smallest means. He acts thus in nature and in providence. For the production of a gigantic tree, He deposits in the earth a tiny seed; for the renovation of his church, He makes use of the meanest instrument to accomplish what emperors,

learned men, and even the heads of that church have failed to effect? We shall shortly have to investigate and bring to light this little seed that a divine hand placed in the earth in the days of the Reformation. We must now distinguish and recognize the different methods by which God prepared the way for the great change.

We will first survey the condition of the Papacy; and from thence we will carry our view over the different influences which God caused to concur to the accomplishment of his purposes.

At the period when the Reformation was on the point of breaking forth, Rome appeared in peace and safety. One might have said that nothing could for the future disturb her triumph. She had gained great and decisive victories. The general councils, those upper and lower senates of Catholicism, had been subdued. The Vaudois and the Hussites had been put down. No university, (except perhaps that of Paris, which sometimes raised its voice at the instance of its kings,) doubted of the infallibility of the oracles of Rome. Every one seemed to take part with its power. The superior clergy preferred to give to a remote head the tenth of their revenues, and quietly to consume the remainder, to the hazarding of all for the acquisition of an independence which would cost dear, and bring little advantage. The humbler clergy, before whom were spread the prospects and baits of higher dignities, were willing to purchase these cherished hopes by a little slavery. Add to which, they were every where so overawed by the heads of the hierarchy, that they could scarcely move under their powerful

hands, and much less raise themselves and make head against them. The people bowed the knee before the Roman altar, and even kings, who began in secret to despise the Bishop of Rome, could not have dared to raise the hand against it, lest they should be reputed guilty of sacrilege.

But if at the time when the Reformation broke out, opposition seemed outwardly to have subsided, or even ceased altogether, its internal strength had increased. If we take a nearer view, we discern more than one symptom which presaged the decline of Rome. The general councils, had, in their fall, diffused their principles through the Church, and carried disunion into the camp of those who impugned them. The defenders of the hierarchy had separated into two parties; those who maintained the system of the absolute power of the Pope, according to the maxims of Hildebrand; and those who desired a constitutional Papacy, offering securities and liberty to the churches.

To this we may add, that in all parties faith in the infallibility of the Roman bishop had been rudely shaken. If no voice was raised to attack him, it was because every one was anxious to retain the little faith he still possessed. The slightest shock was dreaded, lest it should overturn the edifice. The Christianity of the age held-in its breath; but it was to avoid a calamity in which it feared to perish. From the moment when man trembles to quit a once venerated creed, he no longer holds it, and he will soon abandon its very semblance.

Let us see what had brought about this singular

posture of mind. The Church itself was the primary cause. The errors and superstitions she had introduced into Christianity, were not, properly speaking, what had so fatally wounded her. This might indeed be thought if the nations of Christendom had risen above the Church in intellectual and religious developement. But there was an aspect of the question level to the observation of the laity, and it was under that view that the Church was judged:—it was become altogether *earthly*. That priestly sway which governed the world, and which could not subsist but by the power of illusion, and of that halo which invested it, had forgotten its true nature, and left Heaven and its sphere of light and glory, to immerse itself in the low interests of citizens and princes. Born to the representation of the spirit, the priesthood had forsaken the spirit—for the flesh. They had thrown aside the treasures of learning and the spiritual power of the word, and taken up the brute force and false glory of the age: and this had naturally resulted. It was truly the *spiritual* order that the Church had at first attempted to defend. But to protect it against the resistance and invasion of the nations, she had, from false policy, had recourse to earthly instruments and vulgar weapons. When once the Church had begun to handle these weapons, her spiritual essence was lost. Her arm could not become carnal without her heart becoming the same; and the world soon saw her former character inverted. She had attempted to use earth in defence of Heaven: she now employed Heaven itself to defend earthly possessions. Theocratic forms

became, in her hands, only instruments of worldly schemes. The offerings which the people laid at the feet of the sovereign pontiff of Christendom, were used to support the luxury of his court, and the charge of his armies. His spiritual power supplied the steps by which he placed his feet above the kings and nations of the earth. The charm was dispelled; and the power of the Church was gone, from the hour that men could say, "she is become as one of us."

The great were the first to scrutinize the title to this supposed power.* The very questioning of it might possibly have sufficed to overturn Rome. But it was a favourable circumstance on her side, that the education of the princes was every where in the hands of her adepts. These persons inculcated in their noble pupils a veneration for the Roman pontiffs. The chiefs of nations grew up in the sanctuary of the Church. Princes of ordinary minds scarce ever got beyond it. Many even desired nothing better than to be found within it at the close of life. They chose to die wearing a monk's cowl rather than a crown.

Italy was mainly instrumental in enlightening the sovereigns of Europe. They had to contract alliances with the Popes, which had reference to the temporal Prince of the states of the Church,—and not to the Bishop of bishops. Kings were much astonished to find the Popes ready to sacrifice some of the asserted rights of the Pontiff, that they might retain the advantages of the *Prince*. They saw these self-styled organs of truth resort to all the

* Adrien Baillet Hist. des demêlés de Boniface VIII. avec Philippe le Bel. Paris, 1708.

petty artifices of policy, deceit, dissimulation, and even perjury.* Then it was that the bandage that education had drawn over the eyes of secular princes fell off. It was then that the artful Ferdinand of Arragon had recourse to stratagem against stratagem; it was then that the impetuous Louis XII. struck a medal with this legend, *Perdam Babylonis nomen*;† and the respectable Maximilian of Austria, grieved at hearing of the treachery of Leo X., exclaimed, "This Pope, like the rest, is in my judgment a scoundrel. Henceforth I can say that in all my life no Pope has kept his faith or word with me. I hope, if God be willing, that this one will be the last of them."‡

Discoveries of this sort made by kings gradually took effect upon the people. Many other causes had unclosed the long sealed eyes of Christian nations. The most reflecting began to accustom themselves to the idea that the Bishop of Rome was a man, and sometimes even a very bad man. The people began to suspect that he was not much holier than their own bishops, whose characters were very doubtful. But the Popes themselves contributed more than any single cause to their own dishonour. Released from constraint after the Council of Basle, they gave themselves up to the boundless licentiousness of victory. Even the dissolute Romans shuddered. The rumour of these disorders spread through other countries. The people, incapable of arresting the torrent that

* Guicciardini. † I will extirpate the name of Babylon.

‡ Scultet. Annal. ad an. 1520.

swept their treasure into this gulph of profligacy, sought amends in hatred.*

Whilst many circumstances contributed to sap what then existed, there were others tending to the production of something new.

The singular system of theology that had established itself in the Church, was fitted powerfully to assist in opening the eyes of the rising generation. Formed for a dark age, as if the darkness were to endure for ever, this system was destined to be superseded and scattered to the winds as soon as the age should outgrow it. And this took place. The Popes had added now this, and now that article to the Christian doctrine. They had changed or removed only what could not be made to square with their hierarchy; what was not opposed to their policy was allowed to remain during pleasure. There were in this system true doctrines, such as redemption, the power of the Spirit of God, &c., which an able theologian, if one had been found, could have used to combat and overturn the rest. The pure gold mixed with the baser metal in the mint of the Vatican, was enough to reveal the fraud. It is true that if any courageous opponent took notice of it, the winnowing fan of Rome was immediately set to work to cast the pure grain forth. But these rejections and condemnations did but augment the confusion.

That confusion was without bounds, and the

* Odium Romani nominis penitus infixum esse multarum gentium animis opinor, ob ea quæ vulgo de moribus ejus urbis jactantur. (Erasmi Epist. lib. xii. p. 634.)

asserted unity was but one vast disorder. At Rome there were the doctrines of the Court, and the doctrines of the Church. The faith of the metropolis differed from that of the provinces. Even in the provinces there was an infinite diversity of opinion. There was the creed of princes, of people, and, above all, of the religious orders. There were the opinions of this convent, of that district, of this doctor, and of that monk.

Truth, that it might pass safe through the period when Rome would have crushed it with her iron sceptre, had acted like the insect that weaves with its threads the chrysalis in which it envelopes itself during the winter. And, strange to say, the means that had served in this way to preserve the truth, were the scholastic divines so much decried. These ingenious artisans of thought had strung together all the current theological notions, and of these threads they had formed a net, under which it would have been difficult for more skilful persons than their contemporaries to recognise the truth in its first purity. We may regret, that the insect, full of life, and so lately shining with the brightest colours, should wrap itself in its dark and seemingly inanimate covering; but that covering preserves it. It was thus with the truth. If the interested and suspicious policy of Rome, in the days of her power, had met with the naked truth, she would have destroyed it, or, at least, endeavoured to do so. Disguised as it was by the divines of that period, under endless subtleties and distinctions, the Popes did not recognise it, or else perceived that while in that state it could not trouble

them. They took under their protection both the artisans and their handy-work. But the spring might come, when the hidden truth might lift its head, and throw off all the threads which covered it. Having acquired fresh vigour in its seeming tomb, the world might behold it in the days of its resurrection, obtain the victory over Rome and all her errors. This spring arrived. At the same time that the absurd coverings of the scholastic divines fell, one after another, beneath the skilful attacks or derision of a new generation, the truth escaped from its concealment in full youth and beauty.

It was not only from the writings of the scholastic divines that powerful testimony was rendered to the truth. Christianity had every where mingled something of its own life with the life of the people. The Church of Christ was a dilapidated building; but in digging there were in some parts discovered in its foundations the living rock on which it had been first built. Some institutions which bore date from the best ages of the Church still existed, and could not fail to awaken in many minds evangelical sentiments opposed to the reigning superstition. The inspired writers, the earliest teachers of the Church, whose writings were deposited in different libraries, uttered here and there a solitary voice. It was doubtless heard in silence by many an attentive ear. Let us not doubt (and it is a consoling thought) that Christians had many brethren and sisters in those very monasteries wherein we are too apt to see nothing but hypocrisy and dissoluteness.

It was not only old things that prepared the revival of religion; there was also something new which tended powerfully to favour it. The human mind was advancing. This fact alone would have brought on its enfranchisement. The shrub as it increases in its growth throws down the walls near which it was planted, and substitutes its own shade for theirs. The high priest of Rome had made himself the guardian of the nations. His superiority of understanding had rendered this office easy; and for a long time he kept them in a state of tutelage and forced subjection. But they were now growing and breaking bounds on all sides. This venerable guardianship, which had its origin in the principles of eternal life and of civilization, communicated by Rome to the barbarous nations, could no longer be exercised without resistance. A formidable adversary had taken up a position opposed to her, and sought to control her. The natural disposition of the human mind to develope itself, to examine and to acquire knowledge, had given birth to this new power. Men's eyes were opening; they demanded a reason for every step from this long respected conductor, under whose guidance they had marched in silence, so long as their eyes were closed. The infancy of the nations of Modern Europe was passed; a period of ripe age was arrived. To a credulous simplicity, disposed to believe every thing, had succeeded a spirit of curiosity, an intelligence impatient to discover the foundations of things. They asked of each other what was the design of God in speaking to the world? and whether men had a right to set themselves up as media-

tors between God and their brethren? One thing alone could have saved the Church; and this was to rise still higher than the laity. To keep on a level with them was not enough. But on the contrary the Church was greatly behind them. It began to decline just when they began to arise. While the laity were ascending in the scale of intelligence,—the priesthood was absorbed in earthly pursuits and worldly interests. A like phenomenon has been often seen in history. The eaglet had become full fledged, and there was none who could reach it or prevent its taking flight.

Whilst in Europe the light was thus issuing from the prisons in which it had been held captive, the East was sending new lights to the West. The standard of the Osmanlis, planted in 1453 on the walls of Constantinople, had driven thence the learned of that city. They had carried Grecian literature into Italy. The torch of antiquity re-kindled the intellectual flame which had for so many ages been extinguished. Printing, then recently discovered, multiplied the energetic protests against the corruption of the Church, and the not less powerful calls which summoned the human mind to new paths. There was at that time, as it were, a burst of light. Errors and vain ceremonies were exposed. But this light, well suited to destroy, was most unfit to build up. It was not given to Homer or Virgil to rescue the Church.

The revival of letters, of science, and of the arts, was not the moving principle of the Reformation. We may rather say that the Paganism of the poets, when it re-appeared in Italy, brought with it the

Paganism of the heart. Vain superstitions were attacked;—but it was incredulity that established itself in their stead, with a smile of disdain and mockery. Ridicule of all things, even the most sacred, was the fashion, and deemed the mark of wit. Religion was regarded only as an instrument of government. "I have one fear," exclaimed Erasmus in 1516, "it is that with the study of ancient literature the ancient Paganism should reappear."

True, the world saw then, as after the mockeries of the Augustan age, and as in our own times after those of the last century, a new Platonic philosophy, which, in its turn, attacked this impudent incredulity; and sought, like the philosophy of our own days, to inspire respect for Christianity, and reanimate the sentiments of religion. At Florence the Medici favoured these efforts of the Platonists. But never can philosophical religion regenerate the Church or the World. Proud—despising the preaching of the cross—pretending to see in the Christian dogmas only types and symbols unintelligible to the majority of minds—it may evaporate in mystical enthusiasm, but must ever be powerless to reform or to save.

What then would have ensued if true Christianity had not re-appeared in the world—and if true faith had not replenished the heart with its strength and holiness? The Reformation saved religion, and with it society. If the Church of Rome had had at heart the glory of God, and the happiness of nations, she would have welcomed the Reformation with joy. But what were these to a Leo X.?

In Germany, the study of ancient learning had effects the very reverse of those which attended it in Italy and France. It was 'mixed with faith.' What had, in the latter, produced only a certain trivial and sterile refinement of taste, penetrated the lives and habits of the Germans, warmed their hearts, and prepared them for a better light. The first restorers of letters in Italy and in France were remarkable for their levity; often for their immorality. Their German followers, with a grave spirit, sought zealously for truth. There was formed in that country a union of free, learned, and generous individuals, among whom were some of the princes of the land, and who laboured to render science useful to religion. Some of them brought to their studies the humble teachableness of children: others an enlightened and penetrating judgment, inclined perhaps to overstep the limits of sound and deliberate criticism; but both contributed to clear the passages of the temple, hitherto obstructed by so many superstitions.

The monkish theologians perceived the danger, and they began to clamour against the very same studies that they had tolerated in Italy and France, because they were there mixed with levity and dissoluteness. A conspiracy was entered into against languages and sciences, for in their rear they perceived the true faith. One day a monk, cautioning some one against the heresies of Erasmus, was asked "in what they consisted?" He confessed he had not read the work he spoke of, and could but allege "that it was written in too good Latin."

Still all these exterior causes would have been insufficient to prepare the renovation of the Church.

Christianity had declined, because the two guiding truths of the new covenant had been lost. The first, in contra-distinction to Church assumption, is the immediate relation existing between every individual soul and the Fountain of Truth—the second, (and this stood direetly opposed to the idea of merit in human works,) is the doctrine of salvation by Grace. Of these two principles, immutable and immortal in themselves,—for ever true, however slighted or corrupted, which,—it might then have been asked,—was to be first set in motion, and give the regenerative impulse to the Church?—Was it to be the former, the principle of Church authority? Or was it to be the latter, the energy of the Spirit? —In our days men pretend to operate through the social condition upon the soul; through human nature in general, upon individual character. It will be concluded that the principle of a Church was prominent in the movement:—History has shewn the very contrary:—it has proved that it is by individual influence that an impression is produced on the community, and that the first step toward restoring the social condition—is to regenerate the soul. All the efforts for amelioration witnessed in the middle ages arose out of religious feeling:—the question of authority was never mooted till men were compelled to defend against the hierarchy the newly discovered truth.—It was the same in later times, in Luther's case.—When the Truth that saves appears on the one side, sustained by the authority of God's word,—and on the other, the Error that

destroys, backed by the power of the Roman hierarchy, Christians cannot long hesitate; and in spite of the most specious sophisms and the fairest credentials, the claim to authority is soon disposed of.

The Church had fallen because the great doctrine of Justification through faith in Christ had been lost. It was therefore necessary that this doctrine should be restored to her before she could arise. Whenever this fundamental truth should be restored, all the errors and devices which had usurped its place, the train of saints, works, penances, masses, and indulgences, would vanish. The moment the ONE Mediator and his ONE sacrifice were acknowledged, all other mediators, and all other sacrifices, would disappear. "This article of justification," says one* whom we may look upon as enlightened on the subject, "is that which forms the Church, "nourishes it, builds it up, preserves, and defends "it. No one can well teach in the Church, or suc- "cessfully resist its adversary, if he continue not "in his attachment to this grand truth." "It is," adds the Reformer, referring to the earliest prophecy, "the heel that crushes the serpent's head."

God, who was then preparing his work, raised up, during a long course of ages, a succession of witnesses to this truth. But the generous men, who bore testimony to this truth, did not clearly comprehend it, or at least did not know how to bring it distinctly forward. Incapable of accomplishing the work, they were well-suited to prepare it. We may add also, that if they were not prepared for this work, the work itself was not ready for them. The

* Luther to Brentius.

measure was not yet full—the need of the true remedy was not yet felt so extensively as was necessary.

Thus, instead of felling the tree at the root by preaching chiefly and earnestly the doctrine of salvation by grace, they confined themselves to questions of ceremonies, to the government of the Church, to forms of worship, to the adoration of saints and images, or to transubstantiation, &c.; and thus limiting their efforts to the branches, they might succeed in pruning the tree here and there, but they left it still standing. In order to a salutary reformation without, there must be a real reformation within. And faith alone can effect this.

Scarcely had Rome usurped power before a vigorous opposition was formed against her; and this endured throughout the middle ages.

Archbishop Claudius of Turin in the ninth century, Peter of Bruys, his pupil Henry, Arnold of Brescia, in the twelfth century, in France and Italy, laboured to restore the worship of God in spirit and in truth; but they sought that worship too much in the riddance from images and outward ceremony.

The Mystics, who have existed in almost every age, seeking, in silence, holiness, righteousness of life, and quiet communion with God, beheld with alarm and sorrow the wretched condition of the Church. They carefully abstained from the quarrels of the schools, and all the unprofitable discussions beneath which true piety had been well nigh buried. They laboured to turn men from the empty form of an outward worship, from noise and pomp of cere-

monies, that they might lead them to the inward peace of the soul that seeks all its happiness in God. They could not do this without coming in collision with all the received opinions, and exposing the wound of the Church; but still even they had no clear views of the doctrine of justification by faith.

Far superior to the Mystics in purity of doctrine, the Vaudois formed a long continued chain of witnesses for the truth. Men more free than the rest of the Church appear from early times to have inhabited the summits of the Piedmontese Alps. Their numbers had increased, and their doctrine had been purified by the disciples of Valdo. From the heights of their mountains the Vaudois protested for ages against the superstitions of Rome.* "They contended," said they, "for their lively hope "in God through Christ; for regeneration and "inward renewal by faith, hope, and charity; for "the merits of Christ, and the all-sufficiency of his "grace and righteousness."†

And yet this primary truth of the Justification of the sinner, which ought to rise pre-eminent above other doctrines, like Mont Blanc above the surrounding Alps, was not sufficiently prominent in their system.

Pierre Vaud, or Valdo, a rich merchant of Lyons (A. D. 1170), sold all his goods and gave to the poor. He and his friends appear to have had for their object to re-establish in the intercourse of life the perfection of primitive Christianity. He

* Nobla Leycon.

† Treatise on Antichrist, a work contemporary with the Nobla Leycon.

began then, like others, at the branches, and not at the root. Nevertheless his preaching was powerful; for he recalled the minds of his hearers to the Scriptures, which menaced the Roman hierarchy in its foundation.

In 1360 Wicklif made his appearance in England, and appealed from the Pope to the Word of God; but the real inward wound of the Church appeared to him as only one of many symptoms of its malady.

John Huss preached in Bohemia a century before Luther appeared in Saxony. He seemed to enter more deeply than all who had gone before him into the essence of Christian truth. He besought Christ to grant him grace to glory only in his cross, and in the inestimable humiliation of his sufferings. But he attacked rather the lives of the clergy than the errors of the Church. And yet he was, if we may be allowed the expression, the John the Baptist of the Reformation. The flames of his martyrdom kindled a fire which shed an extensive light in the midst of the general gloom, and was destined not to be speedily extinguished.

John Huss did more: prophetic words resounded from the depths of his dungeon. He foresaw that a real reformation of the Church was at hand. When driven from Prague, and compelled to wander in the fields of Bohemia, where he was followed by an immense crowd eager to catch his words, he exclaimed: "The wicked have begun by laying treacherous snares for the *goose*.* But if even the goose, which is only a domestic fowl, a tame crea-

* The word Huss in Bohemian signifying goose.

ture, and unable to rise high in the air, has yet broken their snares, other birds, whose flight carries them boldly towards heaven, will break them with much more power. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will send forth eagles and keen-eyed falcons."* The Reformers fulfilled this prediction.

And when the venerable priest was summoned, by order of Sigismund, before the Council of Constance, and cast into prison, the chapel of Bethlehem, where he had proclaimed the Gospel and the future triumphs of Christ, employed his thoughts more than his own defence. One night, the holy martyr thought he saw from the depths of his dungeon the pictures of Christ, which he had had painted on the walls of his oratory, effaced by the Pope and his bishops. This dream distressed him. Next night he saw several painters engaged in restoring the figures in greater numbers and more vivid colouring; and this work performed, the painters, surrounded by an immense multitude, exclaimed: "Now let the popes and bishops come when they will, they will never again be able to efface them."—"And many persons thereupon rejoiced in Bethlehem, and I amongst them," adds Huss. "Think of your defence, rather than of your dreams," said his faithful friend, the Chevalier de Chlum, to whom he had imparted his dream. "I am no dreamer," replied Huss; "but I hold it certain, that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They desired to destroy it, but it will be imprinted anew on the hearts of men by much better preachers than myself. The nation that

* Epist. J. Huss tempore anathematis scriptæ.

loves Christ will rejoice at this. And I, awaking from the dead, and rising as it were from the grave, shall leap for joy."*

A century elapsed; and the Gospel torch, rekindled by the Reformers, did in truth enlighten many nations, who rejoiced in its beams.

But it was not only amongst those whom Rome regarded as her adversaries, that a life-giving word was heard at that period. Catholicism itself—and we may take comfort from the thought—reckons amongst its own members numerous witnesses for the truth. The primitive edifice had been consumed; but a holy fire smouldered beneath its ashes, and from time to time bright sparks were seen to escape.

Anselm of Canterbury, in a work for the use of the dying, exhorted them "to look solely to the merits of Jesus Christ."

A monk, named Arnoldi, offered up every day in his peaceful cell this fervent prayer, "Oh, Lord Jesus Christ! I believe that in thee alone I have redemption and righteousness."†

A pious bishop of Bâle, Christopher de Utenheim, had his name written upon a picture painted on glass, which is still at Bâle, and round it this motto, which he wished to have always before him, —"My hope is in the cross of Christ; I seek grace, and not works."‡

A poor Carthusian, brother Martin, wrote this

* Huss, epp. sub tempus concilii scriptæ.

† Credo quod tu, mi Domine, Jesu Christe solus es mea justitia et redemptio.—Leibnitz script. Brunsw. iii. 369.

‡ Spes mea crux Christi; gratiam non opera quæro.

affecting confession: "Oh, most merciful God! I know that I can only be saved, and satisfy thy righteousness, by the merit, the innocent suffering, and death of thy well-beloved Son. Holy Jesus! my salvation is in thy hands. Thou canst not withdraw the hands of thy love from me: for they have created, and formed, and redeemed me. Thou hast inscribed my name with a pen of iron, in rich mercy, and so as nothing can efface it, on thy side, thy hands, and thy feet;" etc. etc. After this the good Carthusian placed his confession in a wooden box, and enclosed the box in a hole he had made in the wall of his cell.*

The piety of brother Martin would never have been known, if his box had not been found, on the 21st of December, 1776, in taking down an old building which had been part of the Carthusian convent at Bâle. How many convents may have concealed similar treasures!

But these holy men only held this faith themselves, and did not know how to communicate it to others. Living in retirement, they might more or less adopt the words of good brother Martin, written in his box: "*Et si hæc prædicta confiteri non possim linguâ, confiteor tamen corde et scripto.*—If I cannot confess these things with my tongue, I at least confess them with my pen and with my heart." The word of truth was laid up in the sanctuary of many a pious mind, but to use an expression in the Gospel, it had not free course in the world.

* Sciens posse me aliter non salvari et tibi satisfacere nisi per meritum, etc. See for the citations, and many others, Flaccius Catal. Test. Veritatis; Wolfii Lect. Memorabiles; Müller's Reliquien, etc. etc.

If men did not openly confess the doctrine of salvation, they at least did not fear, even within the pale of the Romish Church, boldly to protest against the abuses which disgraced it. Italy itself had at that time her witnesses against the priesthood. The Dominican, Savaronola, preached at Florence in 1498 against the insupportable vices of Rome; but the powers that then were, despatched him by the inquisition and the stake.

Geiler of Kaisersberg was for three and thirty years the great preacher of Germany. He attacked the clergy with energy. "When the summer leaves turn yellow," said he, "we say that the root is diseased; and thus it is, a dissolute people proclaim a corrupted priesthood." "If no wicked man ought to say mass," said he to his bishop, "drive out all the priests from your diocese." The people, hearing this courageous minister, learned even in the sanctuary to see the enormities of their spiritual guides.

This state of things in the Church itself deserves our notice. When the Wisdom of God shall again utter his teachings, there will every where be understandings and hearts to comprehend. When the sower shall again come forth to sow, he will find ground prepared to receive the seed. When the word of truth shall resound, it will find echoes to repeat it. When the trumpet shall utter a war-note in the Church, many of her children will prepare themselves to the battle.

We are arrived near the scene on which Luther appeared. Before we begin the history of that great commotion which caused to shoot up in all its bril-

liancy, that light of truth which had been so long concealed, and which, by renovating the Church, renovated so many nations, and called others into existence, creating a new Europe and a new Christianity, let us take a glance at the different nations in the midst of whom this revolution in religion took place.

The Empire was a confederacy of different states, with the Emperor at their head. Each of these states possessed sovereignty over its own territory. The Imperial Diet, composed of all the princes, or sovereign states, exercised the legislative power for the whole of the Germanic body. The Emperor ratified the laws, decrees, or resolutions, of this assembly, and it was his office to publish and execute them. The seven more powerful princes, under the title of Electors, had the privilege of awarding the Imperial crown.

The princes and states of the Germanic Confederacy had been anciently subjects of the Emperors, and held their lands of them. But after the accession of Rodolph of Hapsburg (1273), a series of troubles had taken place, in which princes, free cities, and bishops, acquired a considerable degree of independence, at the expense of the Imperial sovereign.

The north of Germany, inhabited chiefly by the old Saxon race, had acquired most liberty. The Emperor, incessantly attacked by the Turks in his hereditary possessions, was disposed to keep on good terms with courageous chiefs and communities, whose alliance was then necessary to him. Several free cities in the north-west and south of Europe had, by commerce, manufactures, and industry, attained a considerable degree of prosperity, and,

by that means, of independence. The powerful house of Austria, which wore the crown of the Empire, controlled the majority of the states of central Germany, overlooked their movements, and was preparing to extend its dominion, over and beyond the whole Empire, when the Reformation interposed a powerful barrier to its encroachments, and saved the liberties of Europe.

If, in the time of St. Paul, or of Ambrose, of Austin, of Chrysostom, or even in the days of Anselm and Bernard, the question had been asked, what people or nation God would be likely to use to reform the church,—the thought might have turned to the countries honoured by the Apostles' ministry, —to Asia, to Greece, or to Rome, perhaps to Britain or to France, where men of great learning had preached; but none would have thought of the barbarous Germans. All other countries of Christendom had, in their turn, shone in the history of the Church ; Germany alone had continued dark. Yet it was Germany that was chosen.

God, who prepared during four thousand years the Advent of his Messiah, and led through different dispensations, for many ages, the people among whom he was to be born, also prepared Germany in secret and unobserved, unknown indeed even to itself, to be the cradle of a Religious Regeneration, which, in a later day, should awaken the various nations of Christendom.

As Judea, the birth-place of our religion, lay in the centre of the ancient world, so Germany was situate in the midst of Christian nations. She looked upon the Netherlands, England, France,

Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Denmark, and the whole of the north. It was fit that the principle of life should develop itself in the *heart* of Europe,—that its pulses might circulate through all the arteries of the body the generous blood designed to vivify its members.

The particular form of constitution that the Empire had received, by the dispensations of Providence, favoured the propagation of new ideas. If Germany had been a monarchy, strictly so called, like France or England, the arbitrary will of the sovereign might have sufficed to delay for a long time the progress of the Gospel. But it was a confederacy. The truth, opposed in one state, might be received with favour by another. Important centres of light, which might gradually penetrate through the darkness, and enlighten the surrounding population, might be quickly formed in different districts of the Empire.

The internal peace which Maximilian had given to the Empire was no less favourable to the Reformation. For a long while the numerous members of the Germanic body had laboured to disturb each other. Nothing had been seen but confusions, quarrels, wars incessantly breaking out between neighbours, cities, and chiefs. Maximilian had laid a solid basis of public order by instituting the Imperial chamber appointed to settle all differences between the states. The Germans, after so many confusions and anxieties, saw a new æra of safety and repose. This condition of affairs powerfully contributed to harmonize the general mind. It was now possible in the cities and peaceful valleys

of Germany to seek and adopt ameliorations, which discord might have banished. We may add that it is in the bosom of peace that the Gospel loves most to gain its blessed victories. Thus it had been the will of God, fifteen centuries before, that Augustus should present a pacified world for the blessed triumphs of Christ's religion. Nevertheless the Reformation performed a double part in the peace then beginning for the Empire. It was as much cause as effect. Germany, when Luther appeared, offered to the contemplation of an observer the sort of movement which agitates the sea after a continued storm. The calm did not promise to be lasting. The first breath might again call up the tempest. We shall see more than one example of this. The Reformation, by communicating a new impulse to the population, destroyed for ever the old motives of agitation. It made an end of the system of barbarous times, and gave to Europe one entirely new.

Meanwhile the religion of Jesus Christ had had its accustomed influence on Germany. The common people had rapidly advanced ; numerous institutions arose in the Empire, and particularly in the free cities,—well adapted to develop the minds of the mass of the people. The arts flourished ; the burghers followed in security their peaceable labours and the duties of social life. They gradually opened to information, and thus acquired respect and influence. It was not magistrates bending conscience to political expediency, or nobles emulous of military glory, or a clergy seeking gain or power, and regarding religion as their

peculiar property, who were to be the founders of the Reformation in Germany. It was to be the work of the *bourgeoisie*—of the people—of the whole nation.

The peculiar character of the Germans was such as specially to favour a Reformation in religion. A false civilization had not enfeebled them. The precious seeds that a fear of God deposits in a nation had not been scattered to the winds. Ancient manners still subsisted. There was in Germany that uprightness, fidelity, love of toil, and perseverance,—that religious habit of mind—which we still find there, and which presages more success to the Gospel, than the scornful or brutal levity of other European nations.

Another circumstance may have contributed to render Germany a soil more favourable to the revival of Christianity than many other countries. God had fenced it in; he had preserved its strength for the day of its giving birth to his purpose. It had not fallen from the faith after a period of spiritual vigour, as had been the case with the churches of Asia, of Greece, of Italy, of France, and of Britain. The Gospel had never been offered to Germany in its primitive purity; the first missionaries who visited the country gave to it a religion already vitiated in more than one particular. It was a law of the Church, a spiritual discipline, that Boniface and his successors carried to the Frisons, the Saxons, and other German nations. Faith in the "good tidings," that faith which rejoices the heart and makes it free, indeed, had remained unknown to them. Instead of being slowly corrupted, the religion of the Germans had rather

been purified. Instead of declining, it had arisen. It was indeed to be expected that more life and spiritual strength would be found among this people than among those enervated nations of Christendom where deep darkness had succeeded to the light of truth, and an almost universal corruption had taken place of the sanctity of the earliest times.

We may make the like remark on the exterior relation between the Germanic body and the Church. The Germans had received from Rome that element of modern civilization, the faith. Instruction, legislation, all, save their courage and their weapons, had come to them from the Sacerdotal city. Strong ties had from that time attached Germany to the Papacy. The former was a spiritual conquest of the latter, and we know to what use Rome has ever turned her conquests. Other nations, which had held the faith and civilization before the Roman Pontiff existed, had continued in more independence of him. But this subjection of Germany was destined only to make the re-action more powerful at the moment of awakening. When Germany should open her eyes, she would indignantly tear away the trammels in which she had been so long kept bound. The very measure of slavery she had had to endure would make her deliverance and liberty more indispensable to her, and strong champions of the truth would come forth from the enclosure of control and restriction in which her population had for ages been shut up.

When we take a nearer view of the times of the Reformation, we see, in the government of Germany, still further reasons to admire the wisdom of

Him, by whom kings reign, and princes execute judgment. There was, at that time, something resembling what has, in our own days, been termed a system of *see-saw*. When an energetic sovereign presided over the Empire, the imperial power was strengthened; on the other hand, when he was of feeble character, the authority of the Electors gained force.

Under Maximilian, the predecessor of Charles V. this alternate rise and depression of the various states was especially remarkable. At that time, the balance was altogether against the Emperor. The princes had repeatedly formed close alliances with one another. The emperors themselves had urged them to do so, in order that they might direct them at one effort against some common enemy. But the strength that the princes acquired from such alliances against a passing danger, might, at an after period, be turned against the encroachments or power of the Emperor. This did indeed ensue. At no period had the Electors felt themselves more independent of their head, than at the period of the Reformation. And their head having taken part against it, it is easy to see that this state of things was favourable to the propagation of the Gospel.

We may add, that Germany was weary of what the Romans contemptuously termed "*the patience of the Germans.*" The latter had, in truth, manifested much patience ever since the time of Louis of Bavaria. From that period the emperors had laid down their arms, and the ascendency of the tiara over the crown of the Cæsars was acknow-

ledged. But the battle had only changed its field. It was to be fought on lower ground. The same contests, of which emperors and popes had set the example, were quickly renewed in miniature, in all the towns of Germany, between bishops and magistrates. The commonalty had caught up the sword dropped by the chiefs of the empire. As early as 1329, the citizens of Frankfort on the Oder had resisted with intrepidity their ecclesiastical superiors. Excommunicated for their fidelity to the Margrave Louis, they had remained twenty-eight years without masses, baptisms, marriage, or funeral rites. And afterwards, when the monks and priests reappeared, they had openly ridiculed their return as a farce. Deplorable irreverence, doubtless; but of which the clergy themselves were the cause. At the epoch of the Reformation, the animosity between the magistrates and the ecclesiastics had increased. Every hour the privileges and temporal possessions of the clergy gave rise to collision. If the magistrates refused to give way, the bishops and priests imprudently had recourse to the extreme means at their disposal. Sometimes the Pope interfered; and it was to give an example of the most revolting partiality, or to endure the humiliating necessity of leaving the triumph in the hands of the commons, obstinately resolved to maintain their right. These continual conflicts had filled the cities with hatred and contempt of the Pope, the bishops, and the priests.

But not only among the burgomasters, councillors, and town clerks did Rome and the clergy find adversaries; they had opponents both above

and below the middle classes of society. From the commencement of the 16th century, the Imperial Diet displayed an inflexible firmness against the papal envoys. In May, 1510, the States assembled at Augsburg handed to the Emperor a statement of ten leading grievances against the Pope and clergy of Rome. About the same time, there was a violent ferment among the populace. It broke out in 1512 in the Rhenish provinces; where the peasantry, indignant at the weight of the yoke imposed by their ecclesiastical sovereigns, formed among themselves the League of the Shoes.

Thus, on all sides, from above and from beneath, was heard a low murmur, the forerunner of the thunderbolt that was about to fall. Germany appeared ripe for the work appointed for the 16th century. Providence, in its slow course, had prepared all things; and even the passions which God condemns were to be turned by His power to the fulfilment of His purposes.

Let us take a view of other nations.

Thirteen small republics, placed with their allies in the centre of Europe, among mountains which compose as it were its citadel, formed a simple and brave population. Who would have thought of looking to these obscure valleys for the men whom God would choose to be, jointly with the children of the Germans, the liberators of the Church? Who would have guessed that poor and unknown villages, just raised above barbarism—hidden among inaccessible mountains, in the extremity of lakes never named in history,—would, in their connection with Christianity, eclipse Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephe-

sus, Corinth, and Rome? Yet so it was. Such was the will of Him who causeth it to rain upon one city, and causeth it not to rain upon another city, and maketh his showers to descend on one piece of land, while another withereth under drought.*

Circumstances of another kind seemed to surround with multiplied rocks the course of the Reformation in the bosom of the Swiss population. If, in a monarchy, it had to fear the hindrances of power; in a democracy it was exposed to the hazards of the precipitation of the people. True, this Reformation, which, in the states of the Empire, could but advance slowly and step by step, might have its success decided in one day in the general council of the Swiss republic. But it was necessary to guard against an imprudent haste, which, unwilling to wait a favourable moment, should abruptly introduce innovations, otherwise most useful, and so compromise the public peace, the constitution of the state, and even the future prospects of the Reformation itself.

But Switzerland also had had its preparations. It was a wild tree, but one of generous nature, which had been guarded in the depth of the valleys, that it might one day be grafted with a fruit of the highest value. Providence had diffused among this recent people, principles of courage, independence, and liberty, destined to manifest all their strength when the signal of conflict with Rome should be given. The Pope had conferred on the Swiss the title of protectors of the liberties of the Church; but it seems they had understood this honourable name in

* Amos, iv. 7.

a totally different sense from the Pontiff. If their soldiers guarded the Pope in the neighbourhood of the Capitol, their citizens, in the bosom of the Alps, carefully guarded their own religious liberties against the invasion of the Pope and of the clergy. Ecclesiastics were forbidden to have recourse to any foreign jurisdiction. The "lettre des prêtres" was a bold protest of Swiss liberty against the corruptions and power of the clergy. Zurich was especially distinguished by its courageous opposition to the claims of Rome. Geneva, at the other extremity of Switzerland, struggled against its bishops. Doubtless the love of political independence may have made many of its citizens forget the true liberty; but God had decreed that this love of independence should lead others to the reception of a doctrine which should truly enfranchise the nation. These two leading cities distinguished themselves among all the rest in the great struggle we have undertaken to describe.

But if the Helvetic towns, open and accessible to ameliorations, were likely to be drawn early within the current of the Reformation, the case was very different with the mountain districts. It might have been thought that these communities, more simple and energetic than their confederates in the towns, would have embraced with ardour a doctrine of which the characteristics were simplicity and force: but He who said—"At that time two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left," saw fit to leave these mountaineers, while He took the men of the plain. Perhaps an attentive observer might have discerned some symp-

toms of the difference which was about to manifest itself between the people of the town and of the hills. Intelligence had not penetrated to those heights. Those Cantons, which had founded Swiss liberty, proud of the part they had played in the grand struggle for independence, were not disposed to be tamely instructed by their younger brethren of the plain. Why, they might ask, should they change the faith in which they had expelled the Austrians, and which had consecrated by altars all the scenes of their triumphs? Their priests were the only enlightened guides to whom they could apply; their worship and their festivals were occupation and diversion for their tranquil lives, and enlivened the silence of their peaceful retreats. They continued closed against religious innovations.

Passing the Alps, we find ourselves in that Italy, which, in the eyes of many, was the Holy Land of Christianity. Whence would Europe look for good to the Church but from Italy, and from Rome itself? The power which placed successively upon the pontifical chair so many different characters, might it not one day place thereon a pontiff who should become an instrument of blessing to the Lord's heritage? Even if no hope was to be placed on the Popes, were there not *there* bishops and councils which would reform the Church? Nothing good can come out of Nazareth; it must proceed from Jerusalem,—from Rome. Such might have been the thoughts of men, but God's thoughts were not as theirs. He says, "Let him that is filthy be filthy still;"* and He left Italy to its unrighteousness.

* Rev. xxii. 11.

Many causes conspired to deprive this unhappy country of Gospel light. Its different states, sometimes rivals, sometimes enemies, came into violent collision as often as they were shaken by any commotion. This land of ancient glory was by turns the prey of intestine wars and foreign invasions; the stratagems of policy, the violence of factions, the agitation of battles, seemed to be its sole occupation, and to banish for a long time the Gospel of peace.

Italy, broken to pieces, and without unity, appeared but little suited to receive one general impulse. Every frontier line was as a new barrier, where truth would be stopped and challenged, if it sought to cross the Alps, or to land on those smiling shores. It was true the Papacy was then planning an union of all Italy, desiring, as Pope Julius expressed it, to expel the *barbarians*,—that is, the foreign princes; and she hovered like a bird of prey over the mutilated and palpitating members of ancient Italy. But if she had gained her ends, we may easily believe that the Reformation would not have been thereby advanced.

And if the truth was destined to come to them from the north, how could the Italians so enlightened, of so refined a taste and social habits, so delicate in their own eyes, condescend to receive any thing at the hands of the barbarous Germans. Their pride, in fact, raised between the Reformation and themselves a barrier higher than the Alps. But the very nature of their mental culture was a still greater obstacle than the presumption of their hearts. Could men, who admired the elegance of

a well cadenced sonnet more than the majestic simplicity of the Scriptures, be a propitious soil for the seed of God's word? A false civilization is, of all conditions of a nation, that which is most repugnant to the Gospel.

Finally, whatever might be the state of things to Italy—Rome was always ROME. Not only did the temporal power of the Popes incline the several parties in Italy to court at any cost their alliance and favour, but, in addition to this, the universal sway of Rome offered more than one inducement to the avarice and vanity of the Italian states. Whenever it should become a question of emancipation of the rest of the world from the yoke of Rome, Italy would again become Italy! domestic quarrels would not be suffered to prevail to the advantage of a foreign system; and attacks directed against the head of the peninsula would immediately call up the affections and common interests from their long sleep.

The Reformation, then, had little prospect of success in that country. Nevertheless, there were found within its confines souls prepared to receive the Gospel light, and Italy was not then entirely disinherited.

Spain possessed what Italy did not,—a serious and noble people, whose religious mind has resisted even the stern trial of the eighteenth century, and of the Revolution, and maintained itself to our own days. In every age this people has had among its clergy men of piety and learning, and it was sufficiently remote from Rome to throw off without difficulty her yoke. There are few nations wherein

one might more reasonably have hoped for a revival of that primitive Christianity, which Spain had probably received from St. Paul himself. And yet Spain did not then stand up among the nations. She was destined to be an example of that word of the Divine Wisdom, "The first shall be last." Various circumstances conduced to this deplorable result.

Spain, considering its isolated position, and remoteness from Germany, would feel but slightly the shocks of the great earthquake which shook the Empire. But more than this, she was busily occupied in seeking treasure very different from that which the Word of God was then offering to the nations. In her eyes the new world outshone the eternal world. A virgin soil, which seemed to be composed of gold and silver, inflamed the imaginations of her people. An eager desire after riches left no room in the heart of the Spaniard for nobler thoughts. A powerful clergy, having the scaffolds and the treasures of the land at their disposal, ruled the Peninsula. Spain willingly rendered to its priests a servile obedience, which, releasing it from spiritual pre-occupations, left it to follow its passions, and go forward in quest of riches, and discoveries of new continents. Victorious over the Moors, she had, at the expense of her noblest blood, thrown down the crescent from the towers of Granada, and many other cities, and planted in its place the cross of Jesus Christ. This great zeal for Christianity, which promised so much,—turned against the truth,—for could Catholic Spain, that had triumphed over infidels, refuse to oppose heretics? How could a people who had expelled Ma-

homet from their noble country, allow Luther to make way in it? Their kings went further. They fitted out their fleets against the Reformation. They went forth to meet and conquer it in England and in Holland. But these attacks had the effect of elevating the nations assailed; and, ere long, their power crushed the power of Spain. Thus those Catholic countries lost, owing to the Reformation, that very temporal wealth which had led them, at the first, to reject the spiritual liberty of the Gospel. Yet the Spanish nation was generous and brave; and many of its noble people, with equal ardour, and better knowledge, than those who had rushed upon the swords of the Arabs,—gave up their lives at the stake to the Inquisition.

Portugal was nearly in the same condition as Spain. Emanuel the Fortunate gave to it an "age of gold," which tended to unfit it for that self-denial which Christianity requires. The nation precipitating itself on the newly discovered routes to India and the Brazils, turned its back upon Europe and the Reformation.

Few countries seemed likely to be better disposed than France for the reception of the evangelical doctrines. Almost all the intellectual and spiritual life of the middle ages was concentrated in her. It might have been said that the paths were every where trodden for a grand manifestation of the truth. Men of the most opposite characters, and whose influence over the people had been most powerful, had in some degree countenanced the Reformation. Saint Bernard had set the example of that heart-felt faith, that inward piety, which

is the most beautiful feature of its character. Abelard had introduced into the study of theology that rational principle which, though incapable of developing the truth, is yet powerful for the destruction of error. Many heretics, so called, had revived the light of God's word in the provinces. The University of Paris had placed itself in opposition to the Church, and had not feared to combat it. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Clemangis and the Gersons had spoken out with undaunted courage. The Pragmatic Sanction had been a grand Act of Independence, and promised to be the palladium of Gallic liberty. The French nobility, numerous, jealous of their pre-eminence, and having at this period been gradually deprived of their privileges by the growing power of their kings, must have been favourably disposed towards a religious change which might restore to them some portion of the independence they had lost. The people, of quick feelings, intelligent, and susceptible of generous emotions, were as open, or even more so, than most other nations, to the truth. It seemed as if the Reformation must be, among them, the birth which should crown the travail of several centuries. But the chariot of France, which for so many generations seemed to be advancing to the same goal, suddenly turned at the moment of the Reformation, and took a contrary direction. Such was the will of Him who rules nations and their kings. The prince, then seated in the chariot, and holding the reins, and who, as a patron of learning, seemed likely to be foremost in promoting the Re-

formation, turned his people in another direction. The augury of ages was deceived, and the impulse given to France was spent and lost in struggles against the ambition and fanaticism of her kings. The race of Valois deprived her of her rights. Perhaps if she had received the Gospel, she might have become too powerful. God had chosen a weaker people, a people that as yet was not,—to be the depository of his truth. France, after having been almost reformed, found herself, in the result, Roman Catholic. The sword of her princes, cast into the scale, caused it to incline in favour of Rome. Alas! another sword, that of the Reformers themselves, insured the failure of the effort for Reformation. The hands that had become accustomed to warlike weapons, ceased to be lifted up in prayer. It is by the blood of its confessors, not by that of its adversaries, that the Gospel triumphs. Blood shed by its defenders, extinguishes and smothers it. Francis I. in the very beginning of his reign, eagerly sacrificed the Pragmatical Sanction to the Papacy, substituting a *concordat* detrimental to France, and advantageous to the crown and to the Pope. Maintaining by his sword the rights of the German Protestants at war with his rival, this "father of the sciences" plunged it up to the hilt in the hearts of his own reformed subjects. His successors did, from motives of fanaticism, or weakness, or to silence the clamours of a guilty conscience, what he had done for ambition. They met indeed with a powerful resistance, but it was not always such as the martyrs of the first ages had opposed to their Pagan persecutors. The strength of the Protes-

tants was the source of their weakness; their success drew after it their ruin.

The Low Countries formed, at that period, one of the most flourishing portions of Europe. Its population was industrious, better informed owing to its numerous connections with different regions of the earth, full of courage, and passionately attached to its independence, its privileges, and its liberty. On the very borders of Germany, it would be the first to hear the report of the Reformation; it was capable of receiving it. But all did not receive it. To the poor it was given to receive the truth. The hungry were filled with good things, and the rich sent empty away. The Netherlands, which had always been more or less connected with the Empire, had forty years before fallen to the possession of Austria, and after Charles V., they devolved to the Spanish branch, and so to the ferocious Philip. The princes and governors of this ill-fated country trampled the Gospel under foot, and waded through the blood of its martyrs. The country was composed of two divisions widely dissimilar the one from the other. The south, rich and increased in goods, succumbed. How could its extensive manufactures, carried to such perfection,—how could Bruges, the great mart of northern merchandise, or Antwerp, the queen of commercial cities, make their interests consist with a long and bloody struggle for the things of faith? But the northern provinces, defended by their dykes, the sea, their marshes, and, still more, by the simple manners of the population, and their determination

to suffer the loss of all, rather than of the Gospel,—not only preserved their franchises, their privileges, and their faith, but achieved independence and a glorious existence as a nation.

England then gave little promise of all she has subsequently acquired. Driven from the Continent where she had long obstinately contended for the conquest of France, she began to turn her eyes towards the ocean as to the empire which was designed to be the true end of her victories, and of which the inheritance was reserved for her. Twice converted to Christianity, first under the Britons, then under the Anglo-Saxons, she paid, devoutly, the annual tribute of St. Peter's pence. Yet was she reserved for a lofty destiny. Mistress of the ocean, every where present through all parts of the earth, she was ordained to be one day, with the people to whom she should give birth, as the hand of God to scatter the seed of life in remotest islands and on boundless continents. Already some circumstances gave presage of her destinies. Great intellectual light had shone in the British Isles, and some glimmerings of it still remained. A crowd of foreigners, artists, merchants, workmen, from the Low Countries, Germany, and other regions, thronged her harbours and cities. The new religious opinions would therefore be easily and quickly introduced. Finally, England had then an eccentric king, who, endowed with some learning and considerable courage, was continually changing his purposes and notions, and turning from one side to another, according to the direction in which

his violent passions impelled him. It was *possible* that one of the inconsistencies of Henry VIII. might prove favourable to the Reformation.

Scotland was then torn by factions. A king, five years old, a queen regent, ambitious nobles, an influential clergy, harassed this courageous nation on all sides. It was however destined to hold a distinguished place amongst the nations which should receive the Reformation.

The three northern kingdoms, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, were united under one government. These rude and warlike people seemed likely to have little sympathy with the doctrine of love and peace. Yet from the very energy of their character, they were perhaps better disposed to receive the spirit of the evangelical doctrine than the southern nations. But these descendants of warriors and pirates brought perhaps too warlike a spirit to the support of the Protestant cause; in subsequent times they defended it heroically by the sword.

Russia, situate at the extremity of Europe, had but little connection with other states, we may add, that she belonged to the Greek Church. The Reformation effected in the West had little or no influence upon the East.

Poland seemed well prepared for a Reformation. The vicinity of the Bohemian and Moravian Christians had disposed it to receive that religious impulse which the neighbouring states of Germany were destined speedily to impart to it. As early as the year 1500, the nobility of Poland had demanded that the cup should be given to the laity, appealing to the custom of the primitive Church. The liberty

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which was enjoyed in the cities, and the independence of its nobles, made this country a safe asylum for Christians who were persecuted in their own. The truth they brought with them was joyfully welcomed by numbers.—It is the country which in our times has the fewest confessors of the Gospel.

The flame of Reformation, which had long flickered in Bohemia, had been almost extinguished in blood. Nevertheless some poor survivors, escaped from the carnage, were still living to see the day that Huss had predicted.

Hungary had been distracted by intestine wars, under the rule of princes without ability or experience, who, in the result, made their country a dependency of Austria, by enrolling that powerful house among the heirs of the crown.

Such was the condition of Europe at the beginning of that sixteenth century, which was destined to produce so mighty a change in the great Christian family.

But we have already observed, it was on the vast platform of Germany, and more particularly in Wittemberg, in the heart of the Empire, that the grand drama of the Reformation was to commence.

Let us contemplate the actors in the prologue which ushered in, or contributed to, the work of which Luther was appointed to be in God's hands the hero.

Of all the electors of the Empire the most powerful at that time was Frederic of Saxony, surnamed the Wise. The influence he exercised, joined to his wealth and generosity, raised him above his

equals.* God selected him to serve as a tree, under shadow of which the seed of truth might put forth its first shoot without being rooted up by the tempests around it.

Born at Torgau in 1463, he manifested from his early youth much love for science, philosophy, and piety. Succeeding in 1487, in conjunction with his brother John, to the government of the hereditary states of his family, he received the dignity of Elector from the Emperor Frederic III. In 1493 the pious prince undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Henry of Schaumburg on that sacred spot conferred upon him the order of the Holy Sepulchre. He returned to Saxony in the following summer. In 1502 he founded the university of Wittemberg, which was destined to be the nursery of the Reformation.

When the light dawned, he did not commit himself on either side, but stood by to secure it. No man was fitter for this office; he possessed the general esteem, and was in the intimate confidence of the Emperor. He even acted for him in his absence. His wisdom consisted not in the skilful working of deep laid policy, but in an enlightened and prescient prudence, of which the first law was never for the sake of any self-interest to infringe the rules of honour and religion.

At the same time he felt in his heart the power of the word of God. One day, when the Vicar-General, Staupitz, was in his company, the conversation turned on public declaimers: "All sermons," said

* Qui præ multis pollebat principibus aliis, auctoritate, opibus, potentia, liberalitate et magnificentia. (Cochlæus, Acta Lutheri, p. 3.)

the Elector, "made up of mere subtleties and human traditions, are marvellously cold, without nerve or power, since there is no subtlety we can advance that may not by another subtlety be overturned. Holy Scripture alone is clothed with such power and majesty that shaming us out of our rules of reasoning, it compels us to cry out 'Never *man* spake as this.'" Staupitz assenting entirely to his opinion, the Elector cordially extended his hand to him, and said, "Promise me that you will always think thus."*

Frederic was precisely the prince that was needed for the cradle of the Reformation. Too much weakness on the part of those friendly to the work might have allowed it to be crushed. Too much haste would have caused too early an explosion of the storm that from its origin gathered against it. Frederic was moderate, but firm; he possessed that christian grace which God has in all times required from his worshippers; he waited for God. He put in practice the wise counsel of Gamaliel—"If this work be of man it will come to nought;—if it be of God we cannot overthrow it." "Things are come to such a pass," said the prince to one of the most enlightened men of his time, Spengler of Nuremberg, "that men can do no more:—God alone can effect any thing; therefore we must leave to his power those great events which are too hard for us." We may well admire the wisdom of Providence in the choice of such a prince to guard the small beginnings of its work.

Maximilian I., who wore the Imperial crown

* Luther. epp.

from 1493 to 1519, may be reckoned among those who contributed to prepare the way of the Reformation. He afforded to the other princes the example of enthusiasm for literature and science. He was less attached than any other to the Popes, and had even thoughts of seizing on the Papacy. No one can say what it might have become in his hands; but we may be allowed to imagine from this circumstance, that a rival power to the Pope, such as the Reformation, would not have reckoned the Emperor of Germany among its fiercest opponents.

Among even the princes of the Romish Church were found venerable men, whom sacred study and a sincere piety had prepared for the divine work about to be wrought in the world. Christopher of Stadion, bishop of Augsburg, knew and loved the truth; but he would have had to sacrifice all by a courageous confession of it. Laurentius de Biba, bishop of Wurtzburg, a kind, pious, and wise man, and esteemed by the Emperor and princes, was accustomed to speak openly against the corruption of the Church. But he died in 1519, too early to take part in the Reformation. John VI., bishop of Meissen, was used to say, "As often as I read the Bible, I find there a different religion from that which is taught to us." John Thurzo, bishop of Breslau, was called by Luther the best bishop of the age.* But he, too, died in 1520. William Briçonnet, bishop of Meaux, contributed largely to introduce the Reformation in France. Who indeed can say to what extent the enlightened piety of these bishops and of many

* Lutheri, epp. i. p. 524.

others, was of use in preparing, each in his diocese, and beyond it, the great work of the Reformation?

But it was reserved to men of lower station than these princes or bishops to become the chief instruments of God's providence in the work of preparation. It was the scholars and the learned, then termed *humanists*, who exercised the greatest influence on their age.

There existed at that time open war between these disciples of letters and the scholastic divines. The latter beheld with alarm the great movements going on in the field of intelligence, and took up with the notion that immobility and ignorance would be the best safeguards of the Church. It was to save Rome that divines opposed the revival of letters; but by so doing they in reality contributed to her ruin, and Rome herself unconsciously co-operated in it. In an unguarded moment, under the pontificate of Leo X. she forsook her old friends and embraced her youthful adversaries. The Papacy formed with literature a union which seemed likely to break the old alliance with the monastic orders. The Popes did not at first perceive that what they had taken up as a toy was in reality a sword that might destroy them. Thus in the last century we beheld princes who received at their courts a tone of politics and a philosophy which, if they had experienced their full effect, would have overturned their thrones. The alliance of which we have spoken did not last long. Literature advanced, entirely regardless of that which might endanger the power of its patrons. The monks and the scholastic divines perceived that to

forsake the Pope would be to abandon their own interests. And the Pope, notwithstanding the transient patronage which he bestowed upon the fine arts, adopted, when it suited his interest, measures most opposed to the spirit of the time.

The revival of letters presented at that time an animating spectacle. Let us sketch some lines of this picture, selecting such as have the closest connexion with the revival of the true faith.

In order that the truth might triumph, it was necessary that the arms that were to achieve the victory should be taken from the arsenal in which for ages they had lain hidden. These weapons were the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. It was necessary to revive in Christendom the love and study of the sacred Greek and Hebrew texts. The man chosen by God for this work was John Reuchlin.

A very sweet toned child's voice had been noticed in the choir of the church of Pforzheim. It attracted the attention of the Margrave of Baden. It proved to be that of John Reuchlin, a young boy, of pleasing manners and of a sprightly disposition, the son of an honest citizen of the place. The Margrave treated him with great favour, and made choice of him in 1473 to accompany his son Frederic to the University of Paris.

The son of the bailiff of Pforzheim in transports of joy arrived in company with the prince at this most celebrated school of the West. He there found the Spartan Hermonymos, and John Weissel, surnamed the *Light of the World*, and he had now an opportunity of studying, under the most able

masters, the Greek and Hebrew, of which there was at that time no professor in Germany, and which he himself was destined one day to restore in the land of the Reformation. The young and indigent German transcribed for rich students the verses of Homer, and the orations of Isocrates, and thus earned the means of prosecuting his studies, and purchasing books.

But he heard other things from Weissel which made a powerful impression on his mind. "The Popes may be deceived," said Weissel. "All satisfaction made by men is blasphemy against Christ, who has completely reconciled and justified mankind. To God alone belongs the power of giving complete absolution. It is not necessary to confess our sins to the priests. There is no purgatory, unless it be God himself, who is a consuming fire, and purifies from all pollution."

When Reuchlin was hardly twenty, he taught philosophy and Greek and Latin at Bâle, and it was then accounted almost a miracle that a German should speak Greek.

The partisans of Rome began to be uneasy when they saw men of independent character searching into these ancient treasures. "The Romans make a wry face," said Reuchlin, "and clamorously assert that all such literary labours are contrary to Roman piety, since the Greeks are schismatics. Oh! what pains and patience are needed to restore wisdom and learning to Germany!"

Soon after, Eberhard of Würtemberg, invited Reuchlin to Tubingen, to adorn that rising university; and in 1487 he took him into Italy. Chal-

condylas, Aurispa, John Picus of Mirandola, were his friends and companions at Florence. And at Rome, when Eberhard had a solemn audience of the Pope, surrounded by his cardinals, Reuchlin pronounced an address in such pure and elegant Latin, that the assembly, who expected nothing of that kind from a barbarous German, were in the utmost astonishment, and the Pope exclaimed, "Certainly this man deserves to be ranked with the best orators of France and Italy."

Ten years after, Reuchlin was obliged to take refuge at Heidelberg, at the court of the Elector Philip, to escape the vengeance of the successor of Eberhard. Philip, in conjunction with John of Dalberg, bishop of Worms, his friend and chancellor, endeavoured to diffuse the light that was beginning to dawn in all parts of Germany. Dalberg had formed a library, which was open to all the studious. Reuchlin made, in this new field, great efforts to enlighten and civilize the people.

Being sent to Rome by the Elector in 1498, on an important mission, he employed the time and money he could command, either in improving himself in the Hebrew, under the instruction of the learned Jew, Abdias Sphorna, or in purchasing whatever Hebrew and Greek manuscripts he could meet with, intending to use them as torches, to diffuse in his own country the light which was beginning to appear.

An illustrious Greek, Argyropylos, was explaining in that metropolis, to a numerous auditory, the wonderful progress his nation had formerly made in literature. The learned ambassador went with his

suite to the room where the master was teaching, and on his entrance saluted him, and lamented the misery of Greece, then languishing under Turkish despotism. The astonished Greek asked the German: "Whence come you, and do you understand Greek?" Reuchlin replied: "I am a German, and am not quite ignorant of your language." At the request of Argyropylos, he read and explained a passage of Thucydides, which the professor happened to have before him; upon which Argyropylos cried out in grief and astonishment, "Alas! alas! Greece, cast out and fugitive, is gone to hide herself beyond the Alps."

It was thus that the sons of barbarous Germany and those of ancient Greece met together in the palaces of Rome; thus it was that the East and the West gave each other the right hand of fellowship in this rendezvous of the world, and that the former poured into the hands of the latter those intellectual treasures which it had carried off in its escape from the barbarism of the Turks. God, when his plans require it, brings together in an instant, by some unlooked-for catastrophe, those who seemed for ever removed from each other.

On his return to Germany, Reuchlin was again permitted to take up his abode at Würtemberg. It was at this time that he entered upon the labours that were most useful to Luther and to the Reformation. He translated and expounded the Penitential Psalms, revised the Vulgate, and especially distinguished himself, by the publication of the first Hebrew and German Grammar and Dictionary. Reuchlin, by this labour, took off the seals from the

ancient Scriptures, and made himself a name more enduring than brass.

But it was not alone by his writings, but also by his life, that Reuchlin sought to promote the cause of truth. He had great influence over the minds of youth, and who can estimate how much the Reformation owes to him on that account? We will mention but one example. A young man, a cousin of his, the son of an artizan, famous as a manufacturer of arms, whose name was Schwarzerd, came to lodge with his sister Elizabeth, for the purpose of studying under his direction. Reuchlin, delighted with the talents and diligence of his young pupil, adopted him, and spared neither advice, presents of books, example, nor any thing else that was likely to make his relation useful to the Church and to his country. He rejoiced in seeing his work prosper in his hands; and thinking his German name Schwarzerd too harsh, he translated it into Greek, according to the custom of the time, and called the young student *Melancthon*. This was the illustrious friend of Luther.

Soon after the amiable Reuchlin was involved, much against his inclination, in a violent contest, which was one of the preludes of the Reformation.

There was at Cologne a baptized Jew, named Pfefferkorn, intimately connected with the inquisitor Hochstraten. This man and the Dominicans solicited and obtained from the Emperor Maximilian, probably with no bad motives, an order, requiring the Jews to bring all their Hebrew books (the Bible excepted) to the town-hall of the city in which they resided, there to be publicly burned.

The reason alleged was, that they were full of blasphemies against Jesus. It must be confessed, that they were at least full of absurdities, and that the Jews themselves would not have lost much by the proposed measure. However, they did not think so; and no power could rightfully deprive them of works which were, in their estimation, of great value. Add to which, the Dominicans might be influenced by other motives than zeal for the Gospel. It is probable that they expected, by this means, to extort considerable ransom from the Jews.

The Emperor asked Reuchlin to give his opinion of these works. The learned doctor pointed out the books that were written against Christianity, leaving them to the fate they deserved; but he tried to save the rest: "The best way to convert the Jews," added he, "would be to establish in each university two masters of the Hebrew language, who should teach divines to read the Bible in Hebrew, and thus refute the Jewish doctors." The Jews, in consequence of this advice, had their writings restored to them.

The proselyte and the inquisitor, like ravens who see their prey escaping, uttered cries of rage and fury. They picked out different passages from the writings of Reuchlin, perverted the sense, declared the author an heretic, accused him of being secretly inclined to Judaism, and threatened him with the inquisition. Reuchlin was at first alarmed, but these men becoming more insolent, and prescribing to him disgraceful conditions of peace, he published, in 1513, a "Defence against his Slanderers at Cologne;" in which he described the whole party in the liveliest colours.

The Dominicans vowed vengeance. Hochstraten erected, at Mayence, a tribunal against Reuchlin. The writings of this learned man were condemned to the flames. Reuchlin appealed to Pope Leo X. This Pope, who did not much like those narrow-minded and fanatical monks, referred the whole affair to the Bishop of Spires; the latter declared Reuchlin innocent, and condemned the monks to pay the expenses of the investigation.

This affair was of great importance, and made much noise in Germany. It exhibited, in the most revolting publicity, the very large class of monkish theologians; it drew together in closer alliance all the friends of learning—then called Reuchlinists, from the name of their distinguished head. This struggle was like an affair of advanced posts, which influenced in a considerable degree the great contest which the heroic courage of Luther afterwards waged with error.

This union of letters with the faith is an important feature of the Reformation, and serves to distinguish it both from the establishment of Christianity, and from the revival in religion taking place in our own days. The Christians, in the Apostles' time, had against them the intellectual cultivation of the age; and, with some exceptions, it is the same at this day. But the majority of men of letters were ranged on the side of the Reformers. Even general opinion was favourable to them. The work gained in extension: perhaps it lost in depth!

Luther, acknowledging all that Reuchlin had done, wrote to him shortly after his victory over the Dominicans: "The Lord has wrought in you,

that the light of his holy word may again shine forth in Germany, where, for so many ages, it has been, alas! not only stifled, but extinct."*

Reuchlin was about twelve years old, when one of the greatest geniuses of that age was born. A man, full of vivacity and wit, named Gerard, a native of Gouda, in the Low Countries, had formed an attachment to the daughter of a physician, named Margaret. The principles of the Gospel did not govern his life; or, to say the least, his passion silenced them. His parents, and nine brothers, urged him to enter into the Church. He fled, leaving Margaret on the point of becoming a mother, and repaired to Rome. The shame-struck Margaret gave birth to a son. Gerard heard nothing of it; and, some time afterwards, he received from his parents intelligence, that she he loved was no more. Overwhelmed with grief, he took priest's orders, and devoted himself to the service of God. He returned to Holland; and, lo! Margaret was still living. She would never marry another; and Gerard remained faithful to his priest's vows. Their affection was concentrated on their infant son. His mother had taken the tenderest care of him. The father, after his return, sent him to school, when he was only four years old. He was not yet thirteen, when his master, Sinthemius of Deventer, embracing him one day in great joy, exclaimed: "That child will attain the highest summits of learning." This was Erasmus of Rotterdam.

* Mai Vita J. Reuchlin (Francof. 1687.)—Mayerhoff J. Reuchlin und seine Zeit. (Berlin, 1830.)

About this time his mother died; and shortly after his father, from grief, followed her.

The young Erasmus,* alone in the world, felt the strongest aversion to the monastic life, which his tutors would have constrained him to embrace. At last, a friend persuaded him to enter himself in a convent of regular canons; which might be done without taking orders. Soon after, we find him at the court of the Archbishop of Cambray; and, a little later, at the university of Paris. There he pursued his studies in the greatest poverty, but with the most indefatigable perseverance. Whenever he could obtain any money, he employed it in the purchase of Greek authors,—and then, of clothes. Often the poor Hollander solicited in vain the generosity of his protectors: hence, in after life, it was his greatest satisfaction to contribute to the support of young and poor students. Devoted incessantly to the investigation of truth and learning, he yet shrunk from the study of theology, from a fear lest he should discover therein any error, and so be denounced as an heretic.

The habits of application which he formed, at this period, continued to distinguish him through life. Even in his journeys, which were generally on horseback, he was not idle. He was accustomed to compose on the high road, or travelling across the country, and, on arriving at an inn, to note down his thoughts. It is in this way that he composed his celebrated "*Praise of Folly*," during a journey from Italy to England.

* He was named Gerhard after his father. He translated this Dutch name into Latin (Desiderius), and into Greek (Erasmus.)

Erasmus very early acquired a high reputation among scholars.

But the monks, irritated by his "Praise of Folly,"* in which he had turned them to ridicule, vowed vengeance against him. Courted by princes, he constantly excused himself from their invitations; preferring to gain his livelihood with Frobenius the printer, by correcting his proofs, to a life of luxury and favour in the splendid courts of Charles V., of Henry VIII., and Francis I.; or even to encircling his head with the cardinal's hat, which was offered to him.†

From 1509 he taught at Oxford. In 1516 he came to Bâle, and in 1521 fixed his abode there.

What was his influence on the Reformation?

It has been too much exalted by some, and too much depreciated by others. Erasmus never was, and never could have become, a Reformer; but he prepared the way for others. Not only did he in his time diffuse a love of learning and a spirit of inquiry and discussion which led much farther than he himself would follow, but, in addition to this, he was able, sheltered by the protection of great prelates and powerful princes, to unveil and combat the vices of the Church by the most pungent satires.

He did more; not satisfied with attacking abuses, Erasmus laboured to recal divines from the scholastic theology to the study of the Holy Scriptures. "The highest use of the revival of philosophy,"

* Εγκώμιον μωρίας. Seven editions of this book were sold in a few months.

† A principibus facile mihi contingeret fortuna, nisi mihi nimium dulcis esset libertas. (Epist. ad Pirck.)

said he, "will be to discover in the Bible the simple and pure Christianity." A noble saying! and would to God that the organs of the philosophy of our days understood as well their proper duty. "I am firmly resolved," said he again, "to die in the study of the Scripture. In that is my joy and my peace."* "The sum of all Christian philosophy," says he in another place, "is reduced to this:—to place all our hope in God, who, without our deserts, by *grace*, gives us all things by Jesus Christ; to know that we are redeemed by the death of his Son; to die to the lusts of the world; and to walk conformably to his doctrine and example; not merely without doing wrong to any, but doing good to all;—to bear with patience our trial in the hope of a future recompence; and finally to ascribe no honour to ourselves on the score of our virtues, but to render praise to God for all our strength and works. And it is with this that man must be imbued until it becomes to him a second nature."†

But Erasmus was not content with making so open a confession of the evangelic doctrine; his labours did more than his words. Above all he rendered a most important service to the truth by publishing his New Testament; the first, and for a long time, the only critical edition. It appeared at Bâle in 1516, the year previous to the usual date of the Reformation. He accompanied it with a Latin translation, wherein he boldly corrected the Vulgate, and with notes, defending his corrections. Thus

* Ad Servatium.

† Ad Joh. Slechtam, 1519. Hæc sunt animis hominum inculcanda, sic, ut velut in naturam transeant. (Er. Epp. i. p. 680.)

Erasmus did that for the New Testament which Reuchlin had done for the Old.

Divines and learned men might thus read the word of God in the original language; and at a later period they were enabled to recognise the purity of the doctrine of the Reformers. "Would to God," said Erasmus, in sending forth this work, "would to God it might bear as much fruit for Christianity as it has cost me labour and application." His wish was realized. In vain did the monks clamour against it. "He pretends to correct the Holy Ghost!" said they. The New Testament of Erasmus shed a brilliant light. This great man also diffused a taste for the word of God by his paraphrases of the Epistle to the Romans. The effect of his studies went beyond his own intentions: Reuchlin and Erasmus gave the Scriptures to the learned;—Luther, *to the people.*

Erasmus served as a stepping-stone to several others. Many who would have taken alarm at evangelical truths brought forward in all their energy and purity, suffered themselves to be drawn on by him, and became afterwards the most zealous actors in the Reformation.

But the very causes that made him a fit instrument to prepare this great work, disqualified him for accomplishing it. "Erasmus knows very well how to expose error," said Luther, "but he does not know how to teach the truth." The Gospel of Christ was not the fire that kindled and sustained his life, the centre around which his activity revolved. In him Christianity was second to *learning*. He was too much influenced by vanity to acquire a

decided influence over his contemporaries. He carefully weighed the effect that each step might have upon his own reputation. There was nothing that he liked better to talk about than himself and his own glory. "The Pope," he wrote to an intimate friend, with a childish vanity, at the period when he declared himself the adversary of Luther, "the Pope has sent me a diploma full of good-will and honourable testimonials. His secretary declares that it is an unprecedented honour, and that the Pope himself dictated it word for word."

Erasmus and Luther are the representatives of two great ideas relative to a Reformation,—of two great parties in their age, and in all ages. The one class are men of a timid prudence; the other those of active courage and resolution. These two great bodies of men existed at this period, and they were personified in these two illustrious heads. The former thought that the cultivation of theological science would lead gradually and without violence to the Reformation of the Church. The more energetic class thought that the spread of more correct ideas amongst the learned would not put an end to the gross superstitions of the people, and that to reform such or such an abuse was of little importance, so long as the life of the Church was not thoroughly renovated.

"A disadvantageous peace," said Erasmus, "is better than the most just war."* He thought,—(and how many Erasmuses have lived since that time, and are still living) he thought that a Reformation

* 'Malo hunc, qualis qualis est, rerum humanarum statum quam novos excitari tumultus," said Erasmus.

which should shake the Church would risk the overturning it; he foresaw with terror passions excited, evil mingling every where with the little good that might be done; existing institutions destroyed without others being substituted in their stead, and the vessel of the Church, letting in water on every side, engulphed at last in the raging billows. "They who let in the ocean to new beds," said he, "are often deceived in the result of their toil: for the mighty element once admitted, stops not where they would have it stayed, but overflows where it will, spreading devastation around."*

But the more courageous party was not at a loss for an answer. History had sufficiently proved that a candid exhibition of the truth, and a decided war against imposture, could alone ensure the victory. If they had used caution and political artifice, the Papal court would have extinguished the light in its first glimmerings. Had not gentler means been tried for ages? Had they not seen Council after Council convoked with the intention of reforming the Church? All had been in vain. Why again try an experiment that had so often failed?

Undoubtedly a thorough Reformation was not to be effected without violence. But when has any thing great or good appeared amongst men without causing some disturbance? Would not the fear of seeing evil mingling with good, if it were allowed, put a stop to the very noblest and holiest undertakings? We must not fear the evil that may arise from general disturbance, but we must strengthen ourselves to resist and overcome it.

* Semel admissum non ea fertur, qua destinarat admissor. (Erasm. Epp. i. p. 953.)

Is there not, moreover, a marked difference between the agitation which arises from human passions, and that which is wrought by the Spirit of God? The former loosens the bonds of society, but the latter strengthens them. How erroneous was it to suppose, with Erasmus, that in the state in which Christianity then was, with that mixture of opposing elements, of truth and error, of life and death, a violent convulsion could possibly be avoided. Close if you can, the crater of Vesuvius when the contending elements are already agitating its bosom! The middle ages had witnessed more than one violent commotion, with an atmosphere less stormy than that existing at the time of the Reformation. We must not at such a moment think of arresting and repressing, but rather of directing and guiding.

If the Reformation had not broke forth, who can estimate the ruin that would have ensued? Society a prey to a thousand destructive elements, without any regenerating or preserving principles, would have been frightfully subverted. Certainly, a Reformation such as Erasmus contemplated, and such as many moderate but timid men of our times still dream of, would have overturned Christian society. The people, deprived of the light and piety which a true Reformation brought down even to the lowest ranks, abandoned to violent passions, and a restless spirit of revolt, would have burst the chain like an enraged animal roused by provocation to uncontrollable fury.

The Reformation was nothing less than the coming in of the Spirit of God among men,—a regulating principle, placed by God upon the earth. It might,

it is true, move the elements of ferment which are hidden in the human heart, but God triumphed over all. The evangelical doctrine, the truth of God, penetrating among the mass of the people, destroyed what was destined to be destroyed,—but every where strengthened what was to be maintained. The effect of the Reformation was to build up. Only prejudice could say that it lowered. And it has been justly observed that the ploughshare might as well be accused of injuring the earth it breaks up only to prepare it for fruitfulness.

The great maxim of Erasmus was, "Give light, and the darkness will disperse of itself." The principle is good; Luther acted upon it. But when the enemies of the light attempted to extinguish it, or to snatch the torch from him who bore it, was it fit that, from a love of peace, they should be suffered to do so? Was it not a duty to resist the wicked?

Erasmus was deficient in courage. But courage is as necessary to effect a reformation as to capture a city. There was much timidity in his character. From his youth he trembled at the mention of death. He took the most extraordinary care of his health. He would avoid, at any sacrifice, a place where contagion prevailed. His relish for the comforts of life surpassed even his vanity, and this was his reason for declining more than one brilliant offer.

Thus it was that he did not pretend to the part of a Reformer. "If the corrupted morals of the court of Rome require a great and speedy remedy," said he, "it is not for me, or such as me, to effect it."* He had none of that strength of faith which

* Ingens aliquod et præsens remedium, certe meum non est. (Er. Epp. i. p. 653.)

animated Luther. Whilst the latter was ever ready to lay down his life for the truth, Erasmus, with perfect ingenuousness, could say, "Let others affect martyrdom: for my part, I think myself unworthy of that honour.* I fear, if a tumult arose, I should be like Peter in his fall."

Erasmus, by his writings and discourses, had, more than any other person, hastened the Reformation; and yet he trembled when he saw the tempest he had raised approaching. He would have given every thing to restore the former calm, even with its heavy vapours. But it was too late,—the dam was broken down. It was no longer possible to stay the violence of the torrent that was at once to cleanse, and fertilise the world. Erasmus was powerful, so long as he was an instrument in God's hands. When he ceased to be that—he was nothing.

In the result, Erasmus knew not on which side to range himself. None pleased him, and he dreaded all. "It is dangerous to speak," said he; "and dangerous to be silent." In all great religious movements, there are such undecided characters,—respectable in some things, but hindering the truth, and who, from a desire to displease no one, displease all.

What, we may ask, would become of truth, if God were not to raise up in its defence more courageous champions? Listen to the advice given by Erasmus to Vigilius Zuichem, afterwards president of the superior court of Brussels, as to his deportment towards the sectaries, (for that was the

* Ego me non arbitror hoc honore dignum. (Ibid.)

name he gave to the Reformers). "My friendship for you makes me to desire that you should keep yourself quite clear of the contagion of sects, and that you give them no ground to claim Zuichem as their own. If you approve their teaching, at least, dissemble your approval; and, above all, never dispute with them. A jurisconsult must be on his guard with these people, as a certain dying man eluded the devil. The devil asked him what he believed. The dying man, fearing that, if he confessed, he should be surprised in some heresy, answered, 'What the Church believes.' His interrogator pressed him with the question, 'What does the Church believe?' The other replied, 'What I believe?' Again, the devil,—'And what do you believe?' and the dying man rejoined, 'What the Church believes.'"*

So, the Duke George of Saxony, the mortal enemy of Luther, having received an equivocal answer to a question he had addressed to Erasmus, exclaimed aloud, "My dear Erasmus, wash me the robe, if you can, without wetting it." Secundus Curio, in one of his works, depicts two heavens, the Papal and the Christian. He found Erasmus in neither; but perceived him incessantly wheeling in never-ending eddies between both.

Such was Erasmus. He wanted that 'liberty of heart' which makes truly free. How different would he have been, if he had given up *himself* to devote his soul to the truth. But after trying to work some reforms, with the approbation of the heads of the Church,—after having, for the sake of Rome, aban-

* Erasmi Epist. 374.

doned the Reformation, when he saw that the two could not walk together,—he lost all his influence with either. On the one side, his recantations could not repress the indignation of the fanatic partizans of Popery. They felt the injury he had done them, and never forgave it. The monks poured forth abuse on him from their pulpits. They called him a second Lucian,—a fox that had laid waste the vineyard of the Lord. A doctor of Constance had the portrait of Erasmus hung up in his study, that he might spit in his face as often as he pleased.

And, on the other hand, Erasmus, forsaking the standard of the Gospel, found himself deprived of the affection and esteem of the noblest men of his age, and had doubtless to suffer the loss of those heavenly consolations which God sheds into the hearts of those who act as good soldiers of Christ. So at least it would seem from the bitter tears, painful vigils, disturbed rest, failure of appetite and loss of relish for literary pursuits, once his only enjoyments, wrinkled forehead, sallow complexion, and dejected and sorrowful expression, that hatred of what he calls a cruel life, and desire of death which he described to his friends.* Poor Erasmus!

The enemies of Erasmus went a little beyond the truth, when they said, on the appearance of Luther, "Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther has hatched it."†

* Vigiliæ molestæ, somnus irrequietus, cibus insipidus omnis, ipsum quoque musarum studium . . . . . ipsa frontis meæ mœstitia, vultûs palor, oculorum subtristis dejectio . . . . (Erasm. Epp. 1. p. 1380.)

† The works of Erasmus were edited by John Leclerc, at Liege, in 1703, in 10 vols. folio. For his life, consult Burigny Vie d'Erasme, Paris, 1757. A. Müller Leben des Erasmus—Hamb. 1828; and

The same signs of new life that were seen among the princes, the bishops, and the learned, were visible among men of the world, nobles, knights, and warriors. The nobles of Germany played an important part in the Reformation. Many of the most illustrious sons of Germany formed a close alliance with literary men, and, inflamed with a zeal sometimes indiscreet, made efforts to deliver their dependants from the yoke of Rome.

Various causes would contribute to make friends to the Reformation among the nobles. Some, having frequented the Universities, had there received into their bosoms that fire with which the learned were animated. Others, educated in noble sentiments, had hearts open to the elevating doctrines of the Gospel. Many found in the Reformation a vague and chivalrous something to charm and captivate them. Others, it must be owned, were influenced by ill will to the clergy, who had helped, under the rule of Maximilian, to deprive them of their ancient independence, and reduce them to submission to their princes. Full of enthusiasm, they deemed the Reformation the prelude of a great political renovation; they hoped to behold the Empire emerge from the crisis with a splendour altogether unprecedented, and a better and more glorious state of things established in the world as much by the sword of chivalry as by the word of God.*

the life inserted by Leclerc in his "*Bibliotheque Choisie.*" See also the able and impartial performance of M. Nisard (Revue des deux mondes)—yet M. Nisard seems to me to be mistaken in his estimate of Luther and Erasmus.

* Animus ingens et ferox, viribus pollens. Nam si consilia et conatus Hutteni non defecissent, quasi nervi copiarum, atque po-

Ulric de Hütten, surnamed the Demosthenes of Germany from his philippics against the Papacy, forms, as it were, the link which then held united the knights and the men of letters. He was no less distinguished by his writings than by his military exploits. Descended from an ancient family of Franconia, he was sent, when eleven years old, to the convent of Fulda, to become in due time a monk. But Ulric, who felt no inclination for that vocation, fled from the convent in his sixteenth year, and repaired to the University of Cologne, where he devoted himself to the study of languages and poetry. At a later period he led a wandering life, was present in 1513 at the siege of Padua, in the capacity of a common soldier, saw Rome and all her abominations, and there sharpened the darts which he afterwards hurled against her.

On his return to Germany, Hütten composed against Rome a writing entitled *The Roman Trinity*. He there strips bare the disorders of that court, and shews the necessity of putting a forcible stop to its oppressions. "There are three things," says a traveller named Vadiscus, introduced in this tract, "which we commonly bring away with us from Rome,—a bad conscience, a vitiated stomach, and an empty purse. There are three things which Rome does not believe in: the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and hell. There are three things which Rome trades in: the grace of Christ, the dignities of the church, and women."—The last writing obliged Hütten to quit the court

tentiæ, jam mutatio omnium rerum extitisset, et quasi orbis status publici fuisset conversus.—*Camer. Vita Melancthonis.*

of the Archbishop of Mentz, where he was residing when he composed it.

When Reuchlin's affair with the Dominicans made a noise, Hütten took the part of the learned doctor. One of his university acquaintance, Crotus Robianus and others, composed at that time the famous satire known by the name of "Letters of Obscure Men," which first appeared in 1516, one year before the theses of Luther. This writing was attributed especially to Hütten, and it is very probable that he had a large share in its composition. In it the monks, who were the enemies of Reuchlin, and are exhibited as the authors of these letters, discourse of the affairs of the time, and of theological subjects, in their manner and in barbarous Latin. They address to their correspondent Eratius, professor at Cologne, the most idiotic and useless questions; they discover with the utmost simplicity their gross ignorance, incredulity, superstition, and low and vulgar spirit, and at the same time their pride, and fanatical and persecuting zeal. They relate to him many of their low adventures and debaucheries, and many scandalous particulars of the conduct of Hochstraten, Pfefferkorn, and other heads of their party. These letters are very amusing, from their mixture of hypocrisy and stupidity: and the whole was so much to the life, that the Dominicans and Franciscans of England received the writing with great approbation, and thought it to be really composed in the principles and for the defence of their order. A prior of Brabant, in his credulous simplicity, bought a large number of copies, and sent them as presents to the most distinguished of the

Dominicans. The monks, more and more irritated, importuned Leo X. for a severe bull against all who should dare to read these letters; but that pontiff refused them. They were compelled to endure the general ridicule, and to suppress their anger. No work ever struck a more terrible blow at the pillars of Popery. But it was not by ridicule and satire that the Gospel was ordained to triumph. If its friends had continued their progress in these ways;—if the Reformation, instead of attacking error with the weapons of God, had had recourse to the spirit of mockery,—its cause had been lost. Luther loudly condemned these satires. One of his acquaintances having sent him one, entitled "The Burthen of the Petition of Pasquin." "The absurdities you have sent me," said he, "appear to be the production of an ill-regulated mind. I have shewn them to some friends, and they all formed the same opinion of them." And in reference to the same work, he wrote to another of his correspondents. "This petition seems to me a freak of the same buffoon who wrote the Letters of Obscure Men. I approve his design, but not his performance; for he deals only in reproachful and insulting language."* This judgment may be thought severe, but it shows the spirit of Luther, and how he rose above his contemporaries.—Yet it must be added that he did not always follow these wise maxims.

Ulric, being obliged to renounce the protection of the Archbishop of Mentz, courted the favour of Charles V. who was then at variance with the Pope.

* Lutheri Epp. i. p. 37, 33.

He repaired to Brussels, where Charles held his court. But, far from gaining any advantage, he learned that the Pope had required the Emperor to send him bound hand and foot to Rome. The inquisitor Hochstraten, the persecutor of Reuchlin, was one of those charged with the office of bringing him to trial. Indignant that his enemies should have dared to make such a demand of the Emperor, Ulric quitted Brabant. Just outside Brussels he met Hochstraten on the road. The terrified inquisitor fell upon his knees and commended his soul to God and the saints. "No," said the knight; "I will not soil my weapon with thy blood!" He gave him some strokes with the flat of his sword, and allowed him to pass unhurt.

Hütten sought refuge in the Castle of Ebernburg, where Francis of Sickingen offered an asylum to all who were persecuted by the Ultramontanes. It was there that his zeal, panting for the enfranchisement of his nation, dictated those remarkable letters addressed to Charles V., Frederic the elector of Saxony, Albert archbishop of Mentz, and the princes and nobility, which place him in the first rank of orators. There he composed all those writings, destined to be read and comprehended by the common people, which spread throughout the German population a horror of Rome and a love of liberty. Devoted to the cause of the Reformer, his design was to lead the nobles to take up arms in favour of the Gospel, and to rush sword in hand on that Rome which Luther aimed to destroy only by the word and invincible power of the truth.

And yet, in the midst of all this warlike exultation, it is delightful to find in Hütten kind and considerate feelings. At the death of his parents, he gave up to his brothers all the property of the family, though he was the eldest son, and even begged them not to write to him nor send him any money, lest, notwithstanding their innocence, they should be exposed to the malice of his enemies, and fall with him into the pit.

If Truth cannot acknowledge him as one of her children, for she ever walks in company with holiness of life and charity of heart, she will at least accord to him an honourable mention as one of the most formidable enemies of error.*

The same may be said of Francis of Sickingen, his illustrious friend and protector. This noble knight, whom many of his contemporaries judged worthy of the Imperial crown, shines in the foremost rank of the warlike antagonists of Rome. Though delighting in the noise of battles, he was full of ardour for learning, and veneration for its professors. At the head of an army which threatened Wurtemberg, he commanded that in case Stutgard should be taken by assault, the house and property of the distinguished scholar, John Reuchlin, should be respected. He afterwards invited him to his camp, embraced him, and tendered him his assistance in the contest between him and the monks of Cologne. Chivalry had for a long time prided itself in despising learning. The period we are retracing presents a new spectacle. Under the

* Hütten's works have been published at Berlin by Munchen, 1822 to 1825, in 5 vols. 8vo.

ponderous cuirasses of Sickingen and Hütten, we perceive that new movement of the general intelligence then every where beginning to make itself felt. The Reformation gave to the world as its first-fruits, warriors who were friends of the arts and of peace.

Hütten, during his residence in the castle of Sickingen, after his return from Brussels, encouraged the brave knight to study the evangelic doctrine, and explained to him the main truths on which it is based. "And is there any man," exclaimed Sickingen in astonishment, "that dares seek to overturn such a doctrine! Who dares to attempt it?"

Several who were at a later period distinguished as Reformers found a refuge in his castle. Among others Martin Bucer, Aquila, Schwebel, Œcolampadius; so that Hütten, with some reason, designated Ebernburg the "house of the just." Œcolampadius preached, according to his custom, every day at the castle. Nevertheless the warriors there collected were ere long weary of hearing so much of the mild virtues of Christianity;—the sermons were too long for them, though Œcolampadius did his best to be brief. They, however, came every day to church, but it was merely to hear the benediction, or to make a short prayer, so that Œcolampadius was used to exclaim, "Alas! the word is here sown upon rocks."

Soon after, Sickingen, wishing to help the cause of truth in his own fashion, declared war against the Archbishop of Treves, "to open a door," as he said, "for the Gospel." It was in vain that Luther, who had then appeared, dissuaded him from it;—he

attacked Treves with five thousand horse and a thousand foot. The courageous Archbishop, assisted by the Palatine and the Landgrave of Hesse, compelled him to retreat. In the spring following, the allies besieged him in his castle of Landstein. After a bloody assault, Sickingen was obliged to retire: he was mortally wounded. The three princes penetrated into the fortress, and passing through its apartments, found the lion-hearted knight in a vault, stretched on his death-bed. He put forth his hand to the Palatine, without seeming to notice the princes who accompanied him. But they overwhelmed him with questions and reproaches. "Leave me in quiet," said he, "for I must now prepare to answer to a greater Lord than ye." When Luther heard of his death, he exclaimed, "The Lord is just but wonderful! It is not by the sword that he will have his gospel propagated."

Such was the melancholy end of a warrior who, as Emperor, or as an Elector, might perhaps have raised Germany to a high degree of glory, but who, confined within a narrow circle, expended uselessly the great powers with which he was gifted. It was not in the tumultuous minds of these warriors that divine truth came to fix her abode. It was not by their arms that the truth was to prevail; and God, by bringing to nought the mad projects of Sickingen, confirmed anew the testimony of St. Paul, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God."

Another knight, Harmut of Cronberg, the friend of Hütten and of Sickingen, appears, however, to have had more wisdom and knowledge of the truth.

He wrote with much modesty to Leo X. urging him to restore his temporal power to him to whom it belonged, namely, to the Emperor. Addressing his subjects as a father, he endeavoured to explain to them the doctrines of the Gospel, and exhorted them to faith, obedience and trust in Jesus Christ, "who," added he, "is the sovereign Lord of all." He resigned to the Emperor a pension of two hundred ducats, "because he would no longer serve one who gave ear to the enemies of the truth." And we find a saying of his recorded which places him, in our judgment, above Hütten and Sickingen: "Our heavenly teacher, the Holy Ghost, can, when he pleases, teach us in one hour much more of the faith of Christ, than could be learned in ten years at the University of Paris."

However, those who only look for the friends of the Reformation on the steps of thrones,* or in cathedrals and academies, and who suppose it had no friends amongst the people, are greatly mistaken. God, who was preparing the hearts of the wise and the powerful, was also preparing amongst the lowest of the people many simple and humble men, who were one day to become the promoters of his truth. The history of those times shews the excitement that prevailed among the lower classes. There were not only many young men who rose to fill the highest offices in the Church, but there were men who continued all their lives employed in the humblest occupations, who powerfully contributed to the revival of Christianity. We will relate some circumstances in the life of one of them.

* See Chateaubriand Etudes Historiques.

He was the son of a tailor, named Hans Sachs, and was born at Nuremberg, the 5th November, 1494. He was named Hans (John) after his father, and had made some progress in his studies, when a severe illness obliging him to abandon them, he applied himself to the trade of a shoemaker. Young Hans took advantage of the liberty this humble profession afforded to his mind to search into higher subjects better suited to his inclination. Since music had been banished from the castles of the nobles, it seemed to have sought and found an asylum amongst the lower orders of the merry cities of Germany. A school for singing was held in the church of Nuremberg. The exercises in which young Hans joined opened his heart to religious impressions, and helped to excite in him a taste for poetry and music. However, the young man's genius could not long be confined within the walls of a workshop. He wished to see that world of which he had read so much in books, of which his companions had told him so much, and which his youthful imagination peopled with wonders. In 1511, he took his bundle on his shoulders, and set out, directing his course towards the south. The young traveller, who met with merry companions on his road, students who were passing through the country, and many dangerous attractions, soon felt within himself a fearful struggle. The lusts of life and his holy resolutions contended for the mastery. Trembling for the issue, he fled and sought refuge in the little town of Wels, in Austria, (1513), where he lived in retirement, and in the cultivation of the fine arts. The Emperor Maximilian hap-

pened to pass through the town with a brilliant retinue. The young poet was carried away by the splendour of this court. The prince received him into his hunting establishment, and Hans again forgot his better resolutions in the joyous chambers of the palace of Inspruck. But again his conscience loudly reproached him. The young huntsman laid aside his glittering uniform, set out, repaired to Schwartz, and afterwards to Munich. It was there, in 1514, at the age of twenty, he sang his first hymn, "to the honour of God," to a well known chaunt. He was loaded with applause. Every where in his travels he had occasion to notice numerous and melancholy proofs of the abuses under which religion was labouring.

On his return to Nuremberg, Hans settled in life, married, and became the father of a family. When the Reformation burst forth, he lent an attentive ear. He clung to that holy Book which had already become dear to him as a poet, and which he now no longer searched for pictures and music, but for the light of truth. To this sacred truth he soon dedicated his lyre. From a humble workshop, situated at one of the gates of the imperial city of Nuremberg, proceeded sounds that resounded through all Germany, preparing the minds of men for a new era, and every where endearing to the people the great revolution which was then in progress. The spiritual songs of Hans Sachs, his Bible in verse, powerfully assisted this work. It would perhaps be difficult to say to which it was most indebted, the Prince Elector of Saxony, Administrator of the Empire, or the shoemaker of Nuremberg!

There was at this time something in every class of society that presaged a Reformation. In every quarter signs were manifest, and events were pressing forward that threatened to overturn the work of ages of darkness, and to bring about "a new order of things." The light discovered in that age had communicated to all countries, with inconceivable rapidity, a multitude of new ideas. The minds of men, which had slept for so many ages, seemed resolved to redeem by their activity the time they had lost. To have left them idle and without nourishment, or to have offered them no other food than that which had long sustained their languishing existence, would have shown great ignorance of human nature. The mind of man saw clearly what was, and what was coming, and surveyed with daring eye the immense gulph that separated these two worlds. Great princes were seated upon the throne, the ancient colossus of Rome was tottering under its own weight; the by-gone spirit of chivalry was leaving the world, and giving place to a new spirit which breathed at the same time from the sanctuaries of learning and from the dwellings of the common people. The art of printing had given wings to the written word, which carried it, like certain seeds, to the most distant regions. The discovery of the Indies enlarged the boundaries of the world. Every thing proclaimed a mighty revolution at hand.

But whence was the stroke to come that should throw down the ancient edifice, and call up a new structure from the ruins? No one could answer this question. Who had more wisdom than Frederic?

Who had more learning than Reuchlin? Who had more talent than Erasmus? Who had more wit and energy than Hütten? Who had more courage than Sickingen? Who had more virtue than Cronberg? And yet it was neither Frederic, nor Reuchlin, nor Erasmus, nor Hütten, nor Sickingen, nor Cronberg. Learned men, princes, warriors, the Church itself, all had undermined some of the old foundations; but there they had stopped: and no where was seen the hand of power that was to be God's instrument.

However, all felt that it would soon be seen. Some pretended to have discovered in the stars sure indications of its appearing. Some, seeing the miserable state of religion, foretold the near approach of Antichrist. Others, on the contrary, presaged some reformation at hand. The world was in expectation. Luther appeared.

BOOK II.

THE YOUTH, CONVERSION, AND EARLY LABOURS OF LUTHER.

1483—1517.

ALL things were ready. God, who prepares his work for ages, accomplishes it, when his time is come, by the feeblest instruments. It is the method of God's providence to effect great results by inconsiderable means. This law, which pervades the kingdom of nature, is discerned also in the history of mankind. God chose the Reformers of the Church from the same condition, and worldly circumstances, from whence he had before taken the Apostles. He chose them from that humble class which, though not the lowest, can hardly be said to belong to the middle ranks. Every thing was thus to make manifest to the world that the work was not of man, but of God. The Reformer, Zwingle, emerged from a shepherd's hut among the Alps; Melancthon, the great theologian of the Reformation, from an armourer's workshop; and Luther from the cottage of a poor miner.

The opening period of a man's life,—that in which his natural character is formed and developed under the hand of God,—is always important. It is especially so in Luther's career. The whole Reformation was there.

The different phases of this work succeeded each other in the mind of him who was to be the instru-

ment for it, before it was publicly accomplished in the world. The knowledge of the Reformation effected in the heart of Luther himself is, in truth, the key to the Reformation of the Church. It is only by studying the work in the individual, that we can comprehend the general work. They who neglect the former, will know but the form and exterior signs of the latter. They may gain knowledge of certain events and results, but they will never comprehend the intrinsic nature of that renovation; for the principle of life that was the soul of it will remain unknown to them. Let us then study the Reformation of Luther himself, before we contemplate the facts that changed the state of Christendom.

John Luther, the son of a peasant of the village of Mora, near Eisenach, in the county of Mansfeld, in Thuringia, descended from an ancient and widely-spread family of humble peasantry,* married the daughter of an inhabitant of Neustadt, in the bishopric of Wurzburg, named Margaret Lindemann. The new married couple left Eisenach, and went to settle in the little town of Eisleben, in Saxony.

Seckendorff relates, on the testimony of Relhan, the superintendent of Eisenach in 1601, that the mother of Luther, thinking her time was not near, had gone to the fair of Eisleben, and that there she was brought to bed of her son. Notwithstanding the credit that is due to Seckendorff, this fact does not seem well authenticated; indeed it is not al-

* Vestus familia est et late propagata mediocrium hominum. (Melanc. Vit. Luth.)

luded to by any of the oldest historians of Luther; moreover, the distance from Mora to Eisleben must be about twenty-four leagues,—a journey not likely to have been undertaken in the state in which Luther's mother then was, for the sake of going to a fair; and lastly, the testimony of Luther himself appears to contradict this assertion.*

John Luther was a man of upright character, diligent in his business, open-hearted, and possessing a strength of purpose bordering upon obstinacy. Of more cultivated mind than the generality of his class, he read much. Books were then rare; but John did not neglect any opportunity of procuring them. They were his recreation in the intervals of rest that his severe and assiduous labours allowed him. Margaret possessed those virtues which adorn good and pious women. Modesty, the fear of God, and devotion, especially marked her character. She was considered by the mothers of families in the place where she resided, as a model worthy of their imitation.†

It is not precisely known how long the new-married couple had been settled at Eisleben, when, on the 10th of November, at 11 o'clock in the evening, Margaret gave birth to a son. Melancthon often questioned the mother of his friend as to the time of her son's birth. "I well remember the day and the hour," replied she; "but I am not certain

* Ego natus sum in Eisleben baptizatusque apud Sanctum Petrum ibidem.—Parentes mei de prope Isenaco illuc migrarunt. (L. Epp. i. p. 390.)

† Intuebanturque in eam cæteræ honestæ mulieres, ut in exemplar virtutum.—(Melancthon Vita Lutheri.)

about the year." But James, the brother of Luther, an honest and upright man, said that, according to the opinion of all the family, Martin was born in the year of our Lord 1483, on the 10th of November. It was the eve of St. Martin.* The first thought of his pious parents was to devote to God, by the rite of baptism, the child that had been sent them. The next day, which was Tuesday, the father, with joy and gratitude, carried his son to St. Peter's church. It was there he received the seal of his dedication to the Lord. They named him Martin, in memory of the day.

Little Martin was not six months old, when his parents left Eisleben, to go to Mansfeld, which is only five leagues distant. The mines of Mansfeld were then much celebrated. John Luther, an industrious man, feeling that he should perhaps be called upon to bring up a numerous family, hoped to get a better livelihood there for himself and his children. It was in this town that the understanding and physical powers of young Luther were first developed; it was there that his activity began to display itself;—there he began to speak and act. The plains of Mansfeld, the banks of the Vipper, were the theatre of his first sports with the children of the neighbourhood.

The early years of their abode at Mansfeld were full of difficulty for the worthy John and his wife. They lived at first in extreme poverty. "My parents," said the Reformer, "were very poor. My father was a woodcutter, and my mother has often carried the wood on her back, that she might earn

* Melancth. Vita Lutheri.

wherewith to bring us children up. They endured the hardest labour for our sakes." The example of parents whom he reverenced, and the habits they trained him to, very early accustomed Luther to toil and frugal fare. How often may Martin, when a child, have accompanied his mother to the wood, and made up and brought to her his little faggot.

There are blessings promised to the labour of the righteous; and John Luther experienced their reality. He gradually made his way, and established at Mansfeld two small furnaces for iron. By the side of these forges little Martin grew up,—and it was with the earnings of this industry that his father was afterwards able to place him at school. "It was from a miner's fireside," says the worthy Mathesius, "that one who was destined to recast vital Christianity was to go forth:—an expression of God's purpose, by his means, to cleanse the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold in His furnace."* Respected by all for his uprightness, irreproachable conduct, and good sense, he was made one of the council of Mansfeld, the chief town of the district so called. Circumstances of too pinching want might have weighed down their child's spirit; while comparatively easy circumstances would dilate his heart and raise his character.

John took advantage of his new appointment, to court the society he preferred. He paid great attention to the learned, and often invited to his table the ecclesiastics and schoolmasters of the place.

* Drumb musste dieser geistliche Schmelzer . . . . . (Mathesius, 1565, p. 3.)

His house offered a sample of those social meetings of citizens that did honour to Germany in the beginning of the 16th century. It was a kind of mirror, to which came, and wherein were reflected, the numerous subjects which successively took possession of the agitated stage of the times. The child derived advantage from this. Doubtless the sight of these men, to whom so much respect was shown in his father's house, excited in the heart of young Martin the ambitious desire that he himself might one day be a schoolmaster or man of learning.

As soon as he was old enough to receive instruction, his parents endeavoured to communicate to him the knowledge of God, to train him in His fear, and form him to the practice of the Christian virtues. They applied the utmost care to this earliest domestic education.* But their solicitude was not confined to this instruction.

His father, desiring to see him acquire the elements of that learning for which he had so much esteem, invoked upon him the blessing of God, and sent him to school. Martin was then a little child. His father and Nicolas Emler, a young man of Mansfeld, often carried him in their arms to the house of George Emilius, and came again to fetch him. Years afterwards, Emler married Luther's sister. Fifty years later, the Reformer reminded the aged Nicolas of this touching mark of affection received in his childhood, and commemorated it on the blank leaves of a book presented to this old friend.†

* Ad agnitionem et timorem Dei . . . . . domesticâ institutione diligenter adsuefecerunt —(Melancth. Vita Luth.)

† Walthers Nachrichten.

The piety of his parents, their active turn of mind and strict virtue, gave to the boy a happy impulse, and helped to form in him a habit of seriousnesss and application. In those days it was the practice to use chastisements and fear as the main impulses in education. Margaret, although she sometimes approved the too great severity of her husband, often opened her maternal arms to Martin, and comforted him in his tears. Yet she herself overstepped the precept of that wisdom which tells us that he who loves his child will chastise him early. The resolute character of the child gave frequent occasion for correction and reprimand. "My parents," said Luther in after life, "treated me cruelly, so that I became very timid; one day for a mere trifle my mother whipped me till the blood came. They truly thought they were doing right; but they had no discernment of character, which is yet absolutely necessary, that we may know when, on whom, and how, punishment should be inflicted."*

At school the poor child was treated with equal severity. His master flogged him fifteen times in one day. "It is right," said Luther, relating this fact, "it is right to punish children, but at the same time we must *love* them." With such an education Luther early learned to despise the attractions of a self-indulgent life. It is a just remark of one of his earliest biographers, that "that which is to become great must begin in small things; and if children are from their youth brought up with too much dain-

* Sed non poterant discernere ingenia secundum quæ essent temperandæ correctiones. (L. Opp. W. xxii. p. 1785.)

tiness and care, they are injured for the rest of their lives."

Martin learned something at school. He was taught the heads of the Catechism, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, some hymns, some forms of prayer, a Latin Grammar composed in the fourth century by Donatus, master of St. Jerome, and which, improved by Remigius, a French monk, in the eleventh century, was for a long while in great repute in the schools; he also read the Cisio Janus, a singular calendar, composed in the tenth or eleventh century;—in a word all that was studied in the Latin school of Mansfeld.

But it appears that the child was not yet led to God. The only religious feeling that he then manifested was that of fear. Every time that he heard Christ spoken of he turned pale with terror; for he had been represented to him only as an angry judge.* This servile fear, which is so far removed from true religion, perhaps prepared his mind for the good tidings of the gospel, and for that joy which he afterwards felt when he learned to know Christ as meek and lowly of heart.

John Luther, in conformity with his predilections, resolved to make his son a scholar. That new world of light and science which was every where producing vague excitement, reached even to the cottage of the miner of Mansfeld, and excited the ambition of Martin's father. The remarkable character, and persevering application of his son, made John conceive the highest hopes of his success. Therefore,

* Mathesius.

when Martin was fourteen years of age, in 1497, his father came to the resolution of parting from him, and sending him to the school of the Franciscans at Magdeburg. Margaret was obliged to yield to this decision, and Martin made preparations for leaving his paternal roof.

Amongst the young people of Mansfeld, there was one named John Reinecke, the son of a respectable burgher. Martin and John, who had been schoolfellows, in early childhood, had contracted a friendship which lasted to the end of their lives. The two boys set out together for Magdeburg. It was at that place, when separated from their families, that they drew closer the bonds of their friendship.

Magdeburg was like a new world to Martin. In the midst of numerous privations, (for he had hardly enough to subsist on), he observed and listened. Andreas Proles, a provincial of the Augustine order, was then preaching with great zeal the necessity of reforming Religion and the Church. Perhaps these discourses deposited in the soul of the youth the earliest germ of the thoughts which a later period unfolded.

This was a severe apprenticeship for Luther. Cast upon the world at fourteen, without friends or protectors, he trembled in the presence of his masters, and in his play hours he and some children, as poor as himself, with difficulty begged their bread. "I was accustomed," says he, "with my companions to beg a little food to supply our wants. One day about Christmas time, we were going all together through the neighbouring villages, from house to house, singing in concert the usual carols on the

infant Jesus born at Bethlehem. We stopped in front of a peasant's house which stood detached from the rest, at the extremity of the village. The peasant hearing us sing our Christmas carols, came out with some food which he meant to give us, and asked in a rough loud voice, 'Where are you, boys?' Terrified at these words, we ran away as fast as we could. We had no reason to fear, for the peasant offered us this assistance in kindness; but our hearts were no doubt become fearful from the threats and tyranny which the masters then used towards their scholars, so that we were seized with sudden fright. At last, however, as the peasant still continued to call after us, we stopped, forgot our fears, ran to him, and received the food that he offered us. It is thus," adds Luther, "that we tremble and flee when our conscience is guilty and alarmed. Then we are afraid even of the help that is offered us, and of those who are our friends, and wish to do us good."*

A year had scarcely elapsed, when John and Margaret, hearing what difficulty their son found in supporting himself at Magdeburg, sent him to Eisenach, where there was a celebrated school, and at which place they had relations.† They had other children, and though their circumstances were much improved, they could not maintain their son in a city where he was a stranger. The unremitting labours of John Luther could do no more than support the family at Mansfeld. He hoped that when

* Lutheri Opera (Walch.) ii. 2347.

† Isenacum enim pene totam parentelam meam habet. L. Epp. i. p. 390.

Martin got to Eisenach he would find it easier to earn his living. But he was not more fortunate there than he had been at Magdeburg. His relations who lived in the town did not trouble themselves about him, or perhaps they were very poor and could not give him any assistance.

When the young scholar was pressed with hunger, he was obliged, as at Magdeburg, to go with his school-fellows and sing in the streets to earn a morsel of bread. This custom of Luther's time is still preserved in many towns in Germany. These young people's voices sometimes form a most harmonious concert. Often the poor modest boy, instead of bread, received nothing but harsh words. More than once, overwhelmed with sorrow, he shed many tears in secret; he could not look to the future without trembling.

One day, in particular, after having been repulsed from three houses, he was about to return fasting to his lodging, when having reached the Place St. George, he stood before the house of an honest burgher, motionless, and lost in painful reflections. Must he, for want of bread, give up his studies, and go to work with his father in the mines of Mansfeld? Suddenly a door opens, a woman appears on the threshold:—it is the wife of Conrad Cotta, a daughter of the burgomaster of Eilfeld.* Her name was Ursula. The chronicles of Eisenach call her "the pious Shunamite," in remembrance of her who so earnestly entreated the prophet Elijah to eat bread with her. This christian Shunamite had more than once remarked young

* Lingk's Reisegesch. Luth.

Martin in the assemblies of the faithful; she had been affected by the sweetness of his voice and his apparent devotion.* She had heard the harsh words with which the poor scholar had been repulsed. She saw him overwhelmed with sorrow before her door; she came to his assistance, beckoned him to enter, and supplied his urgent wants.

Conrad approved his wife's benevolence; he even found so much pleasure in the society of young Luther, that, a few days afterwards, he took him to live in his house. From that moment he no longer feared to be obliged to relinquish his studies. He was not to return to Mansfeld, and bury the talent that God had committed to his trust! God had opened the heart and the doors of a christian family at the very moment when he did not know what would become of him. This event disposed his soul to that confidence in God, which at a later period the severest trials could not shake.

In the house of Cotta, Luther lived a very different life from that which he had hitherto done. He enjoyed a tranquil existence, exempt from care and want; his mind became more calm, his disposition more cheerful, his heart more enlarged. His whole nature was awakened by the sweet beams of charity, and began to expand into life, joy, and happiness. His prayers were more fervent; his thirst for learning became more ardent; and he made rapid progress in his studies.

To literature and science he united the study of

* Dieweil, sie umb seines Singen und herzlichen Gebets willen. (Mathesius, p. 3.)

the arts; for the arts also were then advancing in Germany. The men whom God designs to influence their contemporaries, are themselves at first influenced and led by the tendencies of the age in which they live. Luther learned to play on the flute and on the lute. He often accompanied his fine alto voice with the latter instrument, and thus cheered his heart in his hours of sadness. He also took pleasure in expressing by his melody his gratitude to his adoptive mother, who was very fond of music. He himself loved this art even to his old age, and composed the words and music of some of the most beautiful German hymns.

Happy times for the young man! Luther always looked back to them with emotion! and a son of Conrad having gone many years after to study at Wittemberg, when the poor scholar of Eisenach had become the learned teacher of his age, he joyfully received him at his table and under his roof. He wished to repay in part to the son what he had received from the father and mother.

It was when memory reverted to the Christian woman who had supplied him with bread when every one else repulsed him, that he uttered this memorable saying: "There is nothing sweeter than the heart of a pious woman."

But never did Luther feel ashamed of the time, when, pressed by hunger, he sorrowfully begged the bread necessary for the support of his life and the continuance of his studies. So far from this, he thought with gratitude on the extreme poverty of his youth. He considered it as one of the means that God had made use of to make him what he

afterwards became, and he thanked him for it. The condition of poor children who were obliged to lead the same kind of life, touched his heart. "Do not despise," said he, "the boys who try to earn their bread by chaunting before your door, 'bread for the love of God,' *Panem propter Deum.* I have done the same. It is true that in later years my father maintained me at the University of Erfurth, with much love and kindness, supporting me by the sweat of his brow; but at one time I was only a poor mendicant. And now by means of my pen, I have succeeded so well, that I would not change fortunes with the Grand Seignor himself. I may say more; if I were to be offered all the possessions of the earth heaped one upon another, I would not take them in exchange for what I possess. And yet I should never have known what I do, if I had not been to school, and been taught to write." Thus did this great man acknowledge that these humble beginnings were the origin of his glory. He was not afraid of reminding his readers that that voice whose accents electrified the Empire and the world, had not very long before begged a morsel of bread in the streets of a petty town. The Christian takes pleasure in such recollections, because they remind him that it is in God alone that he is permitted to glory.

The strength of his understanding, the liveliness of his imagination, and his excellent memory, enabled him in a short time to get the start of all his fellow students.* He made especially rapid

* Cumque et vis ingenii acerrima esset, et imprimis ad eloquentiam idonea, celeriter æqualibus suis præcurrit.—(Melancth. Vita Luth.)

progress in the dead languages, in rhetoric, and in poetry. He wrote sermons, and made verses. Cheerful, obliging, and what is called good-hearted, he was beloved by his masters and his companions.

Amongst the professors, he was particularly attached to John Trebonius, a learned man, of an agreeable address, and who had that regard for the young which is so encouraging to them. Martin had observed that when Trebonius came into the school-room he took off his hat and bowed to the scholars: a great condescension in those pedantic times. This had pleased the young man. He began to perceive that he himself was something. The respect paid him by his master had raised the scholar in his own estimation. The colleagues of Trebonius, whose custom was different, having one day expressed their astonishment at this extreme condescension, he answered them;—and his answer made an impression on young Luther. "There are," said he, "amongst these youths, some whom God will one day raise to the ranks of burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates. Though you do not now see the outward signs of their respective dignities, it is yet proper to treat them with respect." Doubtless the young scholar heard these words with pleasure, and perhaps he then saw himself in prospect adorned with a doctor's cap.

Luther had attained his eighteenth year. He had tasted the sweets of learning. He thirsted after knowledge. He sighed for a university education. He longed to go to one of those fountains of all knowledge, where his thirst for it might

be satisfied.* His father required him to study the law. Full of confidence in his son's talents, he desired to see him cultivate them and make them known in the world. Already, in anticipation, he beheld him filling honourable offices amongst his fellow-citizens, gaining the favour of princes, and shining on the great stage of the world. It was determined that the young man should be sent to Erfurth.

Luther arrived at that university in the year 1501; Jodocus, surnamed the Doctor of Eisenach, was then teaching scholastic philosophy in that place with great success. Melancthon regrets that there was at that time nothing taught at Erfurth but a logic beset with difficulties. He expresses the opinion that if Luther had met with professors of a different character, if he had been taught the milder and more tranquillizing doctrines of true philosophy, it might have moderated and softened the natural vehemence of his character.† The new pupil, however, began to study the philosophy of the times in the writings of Occam, Scotus, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas. In later years he looked upon this class of writers with abhorrence:—he trembled with rage when even the name of Aristotle was pronounced in his presence; and he went so far as to say that if Aristotle had not been a man, he should be tempted to mistake him for the devil. But his mind, eager for in-

* Degustatâ igitur litterarum dulcedine, natura flagrans cupiditate discendi appetit academiam.—(Mel. Vit. Luth.)

† Et fortassis ad leniendam vehementiam naturæ mitiora studia veræ philosophiæ.—(Ibid.)

struction, required better food; and he applied himself to the study of the best ancient authors, Cicero, Virgil, and others. He did not satisfy himself, like the generality of students, with learning by heart the works of these writers; but he endeavoured especially to fathom their thoughts, to imbibe the spirit by which they were animated, to make their wisdom his own, to comprehend the object they aimed at in their writings, and to enrich his understanding with their weighty sentences and brilliant descriptions. He often pressed his tutors with inquiries, and soon outstript his school-fellows.* Gifted with a retentive memory and a vivid imagination, all that he had read or heard remained fixed on his memory; it was as if he had seen it himself. Thus did Luther distinguish himself in his early youth. "The whole University," says Melancthon, "admired his genius."†

But even at this early period the young man of eighteen did not study merely with a view of cultivating his understanding; there was within him a serious thoughtfulness, a heart looking upwards, which God gives to those whom he designs to make his most zealous servants. Luther felt that he depended entirely upon God,—a simple and powerful conviction, which is at once a principle of deep humility and an incentive to great undertakings. He fervently invoked the divine blessing upon his labours. Every morning he began the day with

* Et quidem inter primos, ut ingenio studioque multos coæqualium antecellebat. (Cochlæus, Acta Lutheri, p. 1.)

† Sic igitur in juventute eminebat ut toti academiæ Lutheri ingenium admirationi esset.—(Vita Luth.)

prayer; then he went to church; afterwards he commenced his studies, and he never lost a moment in the course of the day. "To pray well," he was wont to say, "was the better half of study."

The young student spent in the library of the university the moments he could snatch from his academical labours. Books being then scarce, it was in his eyes a great privilege to be able to profit by the treasures of this vast collection. One day (he had been then two years at Erfurth, and was twenty years of age,) he was opening the books in the library one after another in order to read the names of the authors. One which he opened in its turn drew his attention. He had not seen anything like it till that hour. He reads the title:—it is a Bible! a rare book, unknown at that time.† His interest is strongly excited; he is filled with astonishment at finding more in this volume than those fragments of the gospels and epistles which the Church has selected to be read to the people in their places of worship every Sunday in the year. Till then he had thought that they were the whole word of God. And here are so many pages, so many chapters, so many books, of which he had no idea! His heart beats as he holds in his hand all the Scripture divinely inspired. With eagerness and indescribable feelings he turns over these leaves of God's word. The first page that arrests his attention, relates the history of Hannah and of the young Samuel. He reads, and can scarcely restrain

* Fleissig gebet, ist uber die Helfft studert. (Mathes. 3.)

† Auff ein Zeyt, wie er die Bücher fein nacheinander besieht . . . kombt et über die lateinische Biblia. . . . (Mathes. 3.)

his joyful emotions. This child whom his parents lend to the Lord as long as he liveth; Hannah's song in which she declares that the Lord raiseth up the poor out of the dust and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set him among princes; the young Samuel who grows up in the temple before the Lord; all this history, all this revelation which he has discovered, excites feelings till then unknown. He returns home with a full heart. "Oh!" thought he, "if God would but give me such a book for my own!"* Luther did not yet understand either Greek or Hebrew. It is not probable that he should have studied those languages during the first two or three years of his residence in the university. The Bible that had filled him with such transport was in Latin. He soon returned to the library to find his treasure again. He read and re-read, and then in his surprise and joy, he went back to read again. The first gleams of a new truth then arose in his mind.

Thus has God caused him to find His word! He has now discovered that book of which he is one day to give to his countrymen that admirable translation in which the Germans for three centuries have read the oracles of God. For the first time, perhaps, this precious volume has been removed from the place that it occupied in the library of Erfurth. This book, deposited upon the unknown shelves of a dark room, is soon to become the book of life to a whole nation. The Reformation lay hid in that Bible.

* Avide percurrit, cœpitque optare ut olim talem librum et ipse nancisci posset. (M. Adami Vit. Luth. p. 103.)

It was in this same year that Luther took his first academical degree, that of a bachelor.

The excessive labour he had undergone in preparing for his examination, occasioned a dangerous illness. Death seemed at hand. Serious reflections filled his mind. He thought his earthly career was at an end. All were interested about the young man. "It was a pity," thought they, "to see so many hopes so early extinguished." Several friends came to visit him on his sick bed. Amongst them was an old man, a venerable priest, who had observed with interest the labours and academical life of the student of Mansfeld. Luther could not conceal the thought that filled his mind. "Soon," said he, "I shall be summoned hence." But the prophetic old man kindly answered, "My dear bachelor, take courage! you will not die this time. Our God will yet make you his instrument in comforting many others.* For God lays his cross upon those whom he loves, and those who bear it patiently gain much wisdom." The words impressed the sick youth. It was as he lay in the dust of death that he heard the voice of a priest remind him that God, as Samuel's mother had said, raiseth up the poor. The old man has poured sweet consolation into his heart, and revived his spirits; he will never forget it. "This was the first prophecy the doctor ever heard," says Mathesius, the friend of Luther, who relates this circumstance, "and he often recollected it." We may easily comprehend in what sense Mathesius calls this speech a prophecy.

* Deus te virum faciet qui alios multos iterum consolabitur. (M. Adami Vit. Luth. p. 103.)

When Luther was restored to health there was in him a something new. The Bible, his sickness, the words of the old priest, seemed to have called him to a new vocation. There was, however, as yet, no settled purpose in his mind. He resumed his studies. In 1505 he was made master of arts, or doctor in philosophy. The university of Erfurth was then the most celebrated in all Germany. The others were in comparison but inferior schools. The ceremony was performed, according to custom, with much pomp. A procession with torches came to do honour to Luther.* The festival was magnificent. There was general rejoicing. Luther, perhaps, encouraged by these honours, prepared to apply himself entirely to the study of the law, agreeably to the wishes of his father.

But God willed otherwise. Whilst Luther was engaged in various studies, and beginning to teach natural philosophy and the ethics of Aristotle, with other branches of philosophy, his conscience incessantly reminded him that religion was the one thing needful, and that his first care should be the salvation of his soul. He had learned God's hatred of sin; he remembered the penalties that his word denounces against the sinner; and he asked himself tremblingly, if he were sure that he possessed the favour of God. His conscience answered: No! His character was prompt and decided; he resolved to do all that depended upon himself, to ensure a well-grounded hope of immortality. Two events occurred, one after the other, to rouse his soul and confirm his resolution.

* L. Opp. W. xxii. p. 2229.

Amongst his college friends there was one, named Alexis, with whom he was very intimate. One morning a report was spread in Erfurth that Alexis had been assassinated. Luther hurried to the spot and ascertained the truth of the report. This sudden loss of his friend affected him, and the question which he asked himself: "What would become of me, if *I* were thus suddenly called away?" filled his mind with the liveliest apprehension.*

It was then the summer of 1505. Luther availed himself of the leisure afforded him by the university vacation, to take a journey to Mansfeld, to revisit the beloved abode of his infancy, and to see his affectionate parents. Perhaps, also, he intended to open his heart to his father, to sound him upon the plan that was forming in his mind, and obtain his permission to engage in a different vocation. He foresaw all the difficulties that awaited him. The idle life of the greater part of the priests was particularly offensive to the active miner of Mansfeld. The ecclesiastics were moreover little esteemed in society: most of them possessed but a scanty revenue; and the father, who had made many sacrifices to keep his son at the university, and saw him lecturing publicly in his twentieth year, in a celebrated school, was not likely readily to renounce his proud hopes.

We are not informed of what passed during Luther's abode at Mansfeld. Perhaps the decided wish of his father made him fear to open his mind to him. He again left his father's house for the halls of the academy. He was within a short dis-

* Interitu sodalis sui constritatus. (Cochlæus, p. 1.)

tance of Erfurth when he was overtaken by a violent storm. The thunder roared; a thunderbolt sunk into the ground at his side. Luther threw himself on his knees. His hour is perhaps come. Death, judgment, eternity, are before him in all their terrors, and speak with a voice which he can no longer resist. "Encompassed with the anguish and terror of death," as he himself says,* he makes a vow, if God will deliver him from this danger, to forsake the world, and devote himself entirely to His service. Risen from the earth, having still before his eyes that death that must one day overtake him, he examines himself seriously, and enquires what he must do.† The thoughts that formerly troubled him return with redoubled power. He has endeavoured, it is true, to fulfil all his duties. But what is the state of his soul? Can he, with a polluted soul, appear before the tribunal of so terrible a God? He *must* become holy. He now thirsts after holiness as he had thirsted after knowledge. But where shall he find it? How is it to be attained? The university has furnished him with the means of satisfying his first wish. Who will assuage this anguish, this vehement desire that consumes him now? To what school of holiness can he direct his steps? He will go into a cloister; the monastic life will ensure his salvation. How often has he been told of its power to change the heart, to cleanse the sinner, to make man perfect! He will enter into a monastic order. He will there be-

* Mit Erschrecken und Angst des Todes umgeben. (L. Epp. ii. 101.)

† Cum esset in campo, fulminis ictu territus. (Cochlæus, 1.)

come holy. He will thus ensure his eternal salvation.*

Such was the event that changed the vocation and the whole destiny of Luther. The hand of God was in it. It was that powerful hand that cast to the ground the young master of arts, the aspirant to the bar, the intended jurisconsult, to give an entirely new direction to his after life. Rubianus, one of Luther's friends at the university of Erfurth, wrote to him in later times: "Divine Providence foresaw what you would one day become, when, on your return from your parents, the fire of heaven struck you to the ground, like another Paul, near the city of Erfurth, and separating you from us, led you to enter the Augustine order." Thus, similar circumstances marked the conversion of two of the greatest instruments chosen by Divine Providence to effect the two greatest revolutions that have ever taken place upon the earth: Saint Paul and Luther.†

Luther re-enters Erfurth. His resolution is unalterable. Still it is with reluctance that he prepares to break ties that are so dear to him. He does not communicate his design to any of his companions. But one evening he invites his college friends to a cheerful and simple repast. Music once more enlivens their social meeting. It is Luther's

* Occasio autem fuit ingrediendi illud vitæ genus quod pietati et studiis doctrinæ de Deo existimavit esse convenientius. (Mel. Vit. Luth.)

† Some historians relate that Alexis was killed by the thunder-bolt that alarmed Luther; but two contemporaries, Mathesius and Selneccer (in Orat. de Luth.) distinguish between these two events; we may even add to their testimony that of Melancthon, who says, "Sodalem nescio quo casu interfectum." (Vita Luth.)

farewell to the world. Henceforth the companions of his pleasures and studies are to be exchanged for the society of monks; cheerful and witty discourse for the silence of the cloister; merry voices, for the solemn harmony of the quiet chapel. God calls him; he must sacrifice all things. Now, however, for the last time, let him give way to the joys of his youth! The repast excites his friends. Luther himself encourages their joy. But at the moment when their gaiety is at its height, the young man can no longer repress the serious thoughts that occupy his mind. He speaks. He declares his intention to his astonished friends; they endeavour to oppose it; but in vain. And that very night Luther, perhaps dreading their importunity, quits his lodgings. He leaves behind his books and furniture, taking with him only Virgil and Plautus. (He had not yet a Bible.) Virgil and Plautus! an epic poem and comedies! Singular picture of Luther's mind! There was, in fact, in his character the materials of a complete epic poem; beauty, grandeur, and sublimity; but his disposition inclined to gaiety, wit, and mirth; and more than one ludicrous trait broke forth from the serious and noble ground-work of his life.

Furnished with these two books, he goes alone in the darkness of the night to the convent of the hermits of St. Augustine. He asks admittance. The door opens and closes again. Behold him for ever separated from his parents, from his companions in study, and from the world. It was the 17th of August, 1505. Luther was then twenty-one years and nine months old.

At length he is *with God.* His soul is safe. He is now to obtain that holiness he so ardently desired. The monks who gathered round the young doctor were full of admiration, commending his decision and renunciation of the world.* But Luther did not forget his friends. He wrote to them, bidding adieu to them and to the world, and the next day he sent them these letters, together with the clothes he had till then worn, and the ring he received, when made master of arts, which he returned to the university, that nothing might remind him of the world he had renounced.

His friends at Erfurth were struck with astonishment. Must it be, thought they, that such eminent talents should be lost in that monastic life, which is but a kind of burial alive.† Full of grief, they immediately repaired to the convent, in hopes of inducing Luther to retract so fatal a resolution; but in vain. The doors were closed against them. A whole month was to elapse before any one could be permitted to see the new monk, or to speak to him.

Luther had almost immediately communicated to his parents the great change that had now taken place. His father was thunder-struck. He trembled for his son, as Luther himself tells us in the dedication of his book on monastic vows, addressed to his father. His weakness, his youth, the strength of his passions, made his father fear that, after the first moments of enthusiasm should have passed,

* Hujus mundi contemptû, ingressus est repente, multis admirantibus, monasterium . . . (Cochlæus, 1.)

† In vitâ semimortuâ.—(Melch. Adami V. L. p. 102.)

the indolent life of a monk might either tempt the young man to despair, or occasion him to fall into some grievous sin. He knew that a monastic life had already ruined many. Besides, the miner of Mansfeld had formed other plans for his son. He had hoped that he would contract a rich and honourable marriage. And now all his ambitious projects were overthrown in one night by this imprudent step.

John wrote an angry letter to his son, in which he used a tone of authority that he had laid aside from the period when his son had been made Master of Arts. He withdrew all his favour, and declared him disinherited from a father's love. In vain did John Luther's friends, and doubtless his wife, endeavour to soften his displeasure, by saying: "If you would make a sacrifice to God, let it be the best and dearest of your possessions, your son, your Isaac." The inexorable town-councillor of Mansfeld would listen to nothing.

After some time, however, (Luther tells us this in a sermon preached at Wittemberg, the 20th of January, 1544), the plague visited the neighbourhood, and deprived John Luther of two of his sons. Just then there came one who told the father, who was in deep affliction: "The monk of Erfurth is also dead." His friends took that opportunity of reconciling the father to the young novice. "If it should be a false report," said they, "at least sanctify your present affliction by consenting that your son should be a monk." "Well, be it so," said John Luther, with a heart broken and yet struggling, "and God grant he may prosper!" When Luther,

at a later period, reconciled to his father, related the event that had induced him to embrace a monastic life: "God grant," replied the worthy miner, "that you may not have mistaken a delusion of the devil for a sign from heaven."*

There was then in Luther little of that which made him in after life the Reformer of the Church. His entering into a convent is a proof of this. It was an act in that spirit of a past age from which he was to contribute to deliver the Church. He who was about to become the teacher of the world, was as yet only its servile imitator. A new stone was added to the edifice of superstition, by the very person who was shortly to overturn it. Luther was then looking for salvation in *himself*, in works and observances; he knew not that salvation cometh of God only. He sought to establish his own righteousness and his own glory,—being ignorant of the righteousness and glory of God. But what he was then ignorant of he soon learned. It was in the cloister of Erfurth that the great change was effected which substituted in his heart God and His wisdom for the world and its traditions, and prepared the mighty revolution of which he was the most illustrious instrument.

Martin Luther, on entering the convent, changed his name, and took that of Augustine. "What can be more mad and impious," said he, in relating this circumstance, "than to renounce one's Christian name for the sake of a cowl! It is thus the popes are ashamed of their Christian names, and

* Gott geb dass es nicht ein Betrug und teuflisch Gespenst sey. (L. Epp. ii. p. 101.)

show thereby that they are deserters from Jesus Christ."*

The monks had received him joyfully. It was no small gratification to their self-love to see the university forsaken, by one of its most eminent scholars, for a house of their order. Nevertheless, they treated him harshly, and imposed upon him the meanest offices. They perhaps wished to humble the doctor of philosophy, and to teach him that his learning did not raise him above his brethren; and thought, moreover, by this method, to prevent his devoting himself to his studies, from which the convent would derive no advantage. The former master of arts was obliged to perform the functions of door-keeper, to open and shut the gates, to wind up the clock, to sweep the church, to clean the rooms.† Then, when the poor monk, who was at once porter, sexton, and servant of the cloister, had finished his work: "*Cum sacco per civitatem*—With your bag through the town!" cried the brothers; and, loaded with his bread-bag, he was obliged to go through the streets of Erfurth, begging from house to house, and perhaps at the doors of those very persons who had been either his friends or his inferiors. But he bore it all. Inclined, from his natural disposition, to devote himself heartily to whatever he undertook, it was with his whole soul that he had become a monk. Besides, could he wish to spare the body? to regard the satisfying of the flesh? Not thus could he acquire the humility, the holi-

* On Genesis, xxxiv. 3.

† Loca immunda purgare coactus fuit.—(M. Adami Vit. Luth. p. 103.)

ness, that he had come to seek within the walls of a cloister?

The poor monk, overwhelmed with toil, eagerly availed himself of every moment he could snatch from his degrading occupations. He sought to retire apart from his companions, and give himself up to his beloved studies. But the brethren soon perceived this, came about him with murmurs, and forced him to leave his books: "Come, come! it is not by study, but by begging bread, corn, eggs, fish, meat, and money, that you can benefit the cloister."* And Luther submitted, put away his books, and resumed his bag. Far from repenting of the yoke he had taken upon himself, he resolved to go through with it. Then it was that the inflexible perseverance with which he ever prosecuted the resolutions he had once formed began to develop itself. His patient endurance of this rough usage gave a powerful energy to his will. God was exercising him first with small trials, that he might learn to stand firm in great ones. Besides, to be able to deliver the age in which he lived from the miserable superstitions under which it groaned, it was necessary that he should feel the weight of them. To empty the cup, he must drink it to the very dregs.

This severe apprenticeship did not, however, last so long as Luther might have feared. The prior of the convent, upon the intercession of the university of which Luther was a member, freed him from the mean offices the monks had imposed upon him. The young monk then resumed his studies with

* Selnecceri Orat. de Luth.

fresh zeal. The works of the Fathers of the Church, especially those of St. Augustine, attracted his attention. The exposition which this celebrated doctor has written upon the Psalms, and his book concerning the Letter and the Spirit, were his favourite reading. Nothing struck him so much as the opinions of this Father upon the corruption of man's will, and upon the grace of God. He felt, in his own experience, the reality of that corruption, and the necessity for that grace. The words of St. Augustine found an echo in his heart: if he could have belonged to any other school than that of Christ, it would have undoubtedly been that of the doctor of Hippo. He almost knew by heart the works of Peter d'Ailly and of Gabriel Biel. He was struck with an observation of the former, that if the Church had not decided otherwise, it would have been preferable to allow that we really receive the bread and wine in the Holy Sacrament, and not mere accidents.

He also studied with attention Occam and Gerson, who have so freely expressed themselves concerning the authority of the Popes. To this course of reading he united other exercises. He was heard publicly to unravel the most complicated arguments, and extricate himself from labyrinths whence others could find no outlet. His hearers were astonished.*

But it was not to gain the credit of being a great genius that he had entered a cloister; it was to

* In disputationibus publicis labyrinthos aliis inextricabiles, diserte multis admirantibus explicabat.—(Melancth. Vit. Luth.)

find the aliments of piety to God.* He regarded these pursuits only as recreations.

He loved, above all, to draw wisdom from the pure spring of the Word of God. He found in the convent a Bible, fastened by a chain. He had constant recourse to this chained Bible. He understood but little of the Word; but still it was his most absorbing study. Sometimes he would meditate on a single passage for a whole day; another time he learned by heart some parts of the Prophets, but, above all, he wished to acquire, from the writings of the Apostles and Prophets, the knowledge of God's will,—to increase in reverence for His name,—and to nourish his faith by the sure testimony of the word.†

It was apparently at this period, that he began to study the Scriptures in the originals, and, by this means, to lay the foundation of the most perfect and useful of his printed works,—the translation of the Bible. He made use of a Hebrew Lexicon, by Reuchlin, which had just appeared. John Lange, a brother in the convent, who was skilled in the Greek and Hebrew, and with whom he always maintained an intimate acquaintance, probably assisted him at the outset. He also made much use of the learned comments of Nicolas Lyra, who died in 1340. It was this circumstance that made Pflug (afterwards Bishop of Naumburg) remark: "*Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset*—If

* In eo vitæ genere non famam ingenii, sed alimenta pietatis quærebat.—(Melancth. Vit. Luth.)

† Ut firmis testimoniis aleret timorem et fidem.—(Ibid.)

Lyra had not played his lyre, Luther had never danced."*

The young monk applied himself to his studies with so much zeal, that often, for two or three weeks together, he would omit the prescribed prayers. But he was soon alarmed by the thought that he had transgressed the rules of his order. Then he shut himself up to redeem his negligence; he set himself to repeat conscientiously all his omitted prayers, without thinking of his necessary food. On one occasion he passed seven weeks almost without sleep.

Burning with the desire after that holiness which he had sought in the cloister, Luther gave himself up to all the rigour of an ascetic life. He endeavoured to crucify the flesh by fastings, macerations, and watchings.† Shut up in his cell, as in a prison, he was continually struggling against the evil thoughts and inclinations of his heart. A little bread, a single herring, were often his only food. Indeed he was constitutionally abstemious. So it was that his friends have often seen him,—even after he had learned that heaven was not to be purchased by abstinence,—content himself with the poorest food, and go four days together without eating or drinking.‡ This is stated on the authority of a credible witness,—Melancthon; and we see from this

* Gesch. d. deutsch. Bibelübersetzung.

† Summa disciplinæ severitate se ipse regit, et omnibus exercitiis lectionum, disputationum, jejuniorum, precum, omnes longe superat. —(Melancth. Vita Luth.)

‡ Erat enim naturâ valde modici cibi et potus; vidi continuis quatuor diebus, cum quidem recte valeret, prorsus nihil edentem aut bibentem.—(Melancth. Vita Luth.)

how little attention is due to the fables which ignorance and prejudice have circulated as to intemperance in Luther. Nothing was too great a sacrifice, at the period we speak of, for the sake of becoming holy to gain heaven. Never did the Romish Church contain a monk of more piety; never did a cloister witness efforts more sincere and unwearied to purchase eternal happiness.* When Luther, become a Reformer, declared that heaven could not be thus purchased, he knew well what he said: "Verily," wrote he to Duke George of Saxony, "I was a devout monk, and followed the rules of my order so strictly, that I cannot tell you all. If ever a monk entered into heaven by his monkish merits, certainly I should have obtained an entrance there. All the monks who knew me will confirm this; and if it had lasted much longer, I should have become literally a martyr, through watchings, prayer, reading, and other labours."†

We approach the period which made Luther a new man; and, by discovering to him the unfathomable love of God, created in him the power to declare it to the world.

Luther did not find, in the tranquillity of the cloister and monkish perfection, the peace he was in quest of. He wanted an assurance that he was saved. This was the great want of his soul; without it he could not rest. But the fears which had shaken him in the world, pursued him to his cell. Nay more, they increased there; and the least cry

* Strenue in studiis et exercitii spiritualibus militavit ibi Deo annis quatuor. (Cochlæus, 1.)

† L. Opp. (W.) xix. 2299.

of his conscience seemed to resound beneath the vaulted roofs of the cloister. God had led him thither, that he might learn to know himself, and to despair of his own strength or virtues. His conscience, enlightened by the Divine Word, taught him what it was to be holy; but he was filled with terror at finding, neither in his heart nor in his life, the transcript of that holiness which he contemplated with wonder in the Word of God. Melancholy discovery! and one that is made by every sincere man. No righteousness within; no righteousness in outward action: every where omission of duty,—sin, pollution.—The more ardent Luther's natural character, the more powerful was this secret and constant resistance of his nature to that which is good, and the deeper did it plunge him into despair.

The monks and theologians encouraged him to do good works, and in that way satisfy the divine justice. "But what works," thought he, "can proceed out of a heart like mine? How can I, with works polluted even in their source and motive, stand before a Holy Judge?"—"I was, in the sight of God, a great sinner," says he; "and I could not think it possible for me to appease him with my *merits*."

He was agitated and dejected; shunning the trivial and dull discourse of the monks. The latter, unable to comprehend the tempestuous heavings of his soul, watched him with astonishment,* while they complained of his silent and unsocial manners.

* Visus est fratribus non nihil singularitatis habere. (Cochlæus, 1.)

One day, Cochlæus tells us, whilst mass was performing in the chapel, Luther's abstraction led him thither, and he found himself in the choir in the midst of the monks, dejected and in anguish of mind. The priest had bowed before the altar—the incense was offered, the *Gloria* chaunted, and the gospel was being read, when the unhappy monk, unable to suppress his mental torment, exclaimed, falling upon his knees, "It is not I—it is not I."* The monks were all amazement, and the solemnity was for an instant interrupted. Luther may perhaps have thought he heard some reproach of which he knew himself guiltless; or he may have meant, at the moment, to declare himself undeserving of being of the number of those to whom Christ's death had brought eternal life. According to Cochlæus, the gospel of the day was the account of the dumb man out of whom Jesus cast a devil. Possibly Luther's exclamation (if the story be true), had reference to this fact, and that resembling the dæmoniac in being like him speechless, he by his cry protested that his silence was owing to a different cause from dæmoniacal possession. Indeed, Cochlæus tells us that the monks did sometimes ascribe the mental distresses of their brother to a secret intercourse with the devil, and that writer appears himself to have shared in the opinion.†

A tender conscience led him to regard the least sin as a great crime. No sooner had he detected it, than he laboured to expiate it by the strictest

* Cum . . . . repente ceciderit vociferans: Non sum! non sum! (Cochlæus, 1.)

† Ex occulto aliquo cum sermone cominario. (Ib.)

self-denial; and that served only to make him feel the inutility of all human remedies. "I tormented myself to death," says he, "to procure for my troubled heart and agitated conscience peace in the presence of God: but encompassed with thick darkness, I nowhere found peace."

All the practices of monkish holiness which quieted so many drowsy consciences around him, and to which in his agony of mind he had recourse, soon evinced themselves to be the useless prescriptions of an empirical quackery in religion. "When during the time I was a monk, I felt temptations assail me, I am a lost man, thought I. Immediately I resorted to a thousand methods to appease the reproaches of my heart. I confessed every day. But all that was of no use. Then, overwhelmed with dejection, I distressed myself by the multitude of my thoughts. See, said I to myself, thou art envious, impatient, passionate; therefore, wretch that thou art! it is of no use to thee to have entered into this holy order."

And yet Luther, imbued with the prejudices of the age, had from his youth deemed the remedies of which he now experienced the inefficacy, the certain cure of a sick soul. What was to be thought of this strange discovery which he had just made in the solitude of his cloister? One may then live in the sanctuary, and yet carry within a man of sin. He has obtained another garment, but not another heart; his hopes are disappointed;—where shall he turn? All these rules and observances, can they then be mere inventions? Such a supposition appeared to him one moment as a temptation of the

devil,—and the next, an irresistible truth. Struggling either against the holy voice which spake in his heart, or against the venerable institutions which had the sanction of ages, Luther's existence was a continued conflict. The young monk moved, like a spectre, through the long corridors of the cloisters with sighs and groans. His bodily powers failed, his strength forsook him; sometimes he was motionless as if dead.*

One day, overcome with sadness, he shut himself in his cell, and for several days and nights suffered no one to approach him. One of his friends, Lucas Edemberger, uneasy about the unhappy monk, and having some presentiment of his state, took with him some young boys, choral singers, and went and knocked at the door of his cell. No one opened or answered. The good Edemberger, still more alarmed, broke open the door, and discovered Luther stretched on the floor in unconsciousness, and without any sign of life. His friend tried in vain to recall his senses, but he continued motionless. Then the young choristers began to sing a sweet hymn. Their clear voices acted like a charm on the poor monk, to whom music had always been a source of delight, and by slow degrees his strength and consciousness returned.† But if for a few instants music could restore to him a degree of serenity, another and more powerful remedy was needed for the cure of his malady; there was

* Sæpe eum cogitantem attentius de irâ Dei, aut de mirandis pœnarum exemplis, subito tanti terrores concutiebant, ut pene exanimaretur. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

† Seckend. p. 53.

needed that sweet and penetrating sound of the Gospel, which is the voice of God. He felt *this* to be his want. Accordingly his sufferings and fears impelled him to study with unwearied zeal the writings of the Apostles and Prophets.*

Luther was not the first monk who had passed through these conflicts. The cloisters often enveloped in their dark walls abominable vices, which, if they had been revealed, would have made an upright mind shudder; but often also they concealed Christian virtues, which grew up beneath the shelter of a salutary retirement; and which, if they had been brought forth to view, would have been the admiration of the world. They who possessed these virtues, living only with each other and with God, drew no attention from without, and were often unknown even to the small convent in which they were inclosed;—their life was known only to God. At times these humble recluses fell into that mystic theology, the melancholy failing of the noblest minds, which in an earlier age had been the delight of the first monks on the banks of the Nile, and which wears out unprofitably the souls in which it reigns.

But whenever one of these men was called to fill a distinguished post, he manifested virtues of which the salutary effects were long and widely felt. The candle being placed on the candlestick gave light to all the house; many were awakened by this light. Thus it was that these pious souls were propagated from generation to generation: and they

* Hoc studium ut magis expeteret, illis suis doloribus et pavoribus movebatur. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

were seen shining like distant torches in the very periods when the cloisters were often only the impure receptacles of darkness.

There was a young man who had thus distinguished himself in one of the convents in Germany. His name was John Staupitz; he was descended from a noble family in Misnia. From early youth he had been marked by a taste for letters and a love of virtue.* He felt the necessity of retirement that he might devote himself to learning. But he soon found that philosophy, and the study of nature, could do nothing for our eternal salvation.

He therefore began to study divinity. But he especially endeavoured to join obedience with knowledge. "For," says one of his biographers, "it is in vain to call ourselves divines, if we do not confirm that noble title by our lives." The study of the Bible and of St. Augustine, the knowledge of himself, the war he, like Luther, had to wage with the deceitfulness and lusts of his own heart,—led him to the Saviour. He found, in faith in Christ, *Peace* to his soul. The doctrine of the Election by Grace especially engaged his thoughts. The uprightness of his life, the depth of his learning, the eloquence of his speech, no less than a striking exterior and dignified manners,† recommended him to his contemporaries. The Elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, honoured him with his friendship, employed him in several embassies, and founded under his direction the University of Wittemberg. Stau-

* A teneris unguiculis generoso animi impetu ad virtutem et eruditam doctrinam contendit. (Melch. Adam. Vita Staupizii.)

† Corporis forma atque statura conspicuus. (Cochl. 3.)

pitz was the first professor of divinity in that school, from whence the light was one day to issue to enlighten the schools and churches of so many nations. He was present at the Council of Lateran, in place of the archbishop of Salzburg, became provincial of his order in Thuringia and Saxony, and afterwards Vicar-general of the Augustines for all Germany.

Staupitz deeply lamented the corruption of morals and the errors of doctrine which then devastated the Church. His writings on 'the love of God,' 'on christian faith,' and 'conformity with the death of Christ,' as well as the testimony of Luther, give proof of this. But he considered the first of these two evils as much greater than the latter. Besides, the gentleness and indecision of his character, his desire not to go beyond the sphere of action which he thought assigned to him, made him more fit to be the restorer of a convent than the Reformer of the Church. He would have wished to raise none but men of distinguished characters to offices of importance, but not finding them, he submitted to the necessity of employing others. "We must," said he, "plough with such horses as we can find; and if we cannot find horses, we must plough with oxen."*

We have seen the anguish and internal struggles which Luther underwent in the convent of Erfurth. At this period the visit of the Vicar-general was announced. Staupitz, in fact, arrived in his usual visitation of inspection. The friend of Frederic, the founder of the University of Wittemberg, the

* L. Opp. (W.) v. 2189.

chief of the Augustines, cast a benevolent look upon those monks who were subject to his authority. Soon one of the brothers attracted his notice. He was a young man of middle stature, reduced by study, fasting, and watching, so that you might count his bones.* His eyes, which were afterwards compared to a falcon's, were sunk; his demeanour was dejected; his countenance expressed a soul agitated with severe conflicts, but yet strong and capable of endurance. There was in his whole appearance something grave, melancholy, and solemn. Staupitz, who had acquired discernment by long experience, easily discerned what was passing in that mind, and at once distinguished the young monk from all his companions. He felt drawn towards him, had a kind of presentiment of his singular destiny, and soon experienced for his inferior a paternal interest. He, like Luther, had been called to struggle; *he* could therefore understand his feelings. He could, above all, shew him the path to that *peace* which he had himself found. What he was told of the circumstances that had induced the young Augustine to enter the convent, increased his sympathy. He enjoined the prior to treat him with more mildness. He availed himself of the opportunities his office afforded for gaining the confidence of the young monk. He approached him affectionately, and endeavoured in every way to overcome the timidity of the novice,—a timidity increased by the respect and fear that he felt for a person of a rank so exalted as that of Staupitz.

The heart of Luther, which had remained closed

* P. Mossellani Epist.

under harsh treatment, at last opened and expanded to the sweet beams of love. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."* Staupitz's heart responded to that of Luther. The Vicar-general *understood him.* The monk felt towards him a confidence till then unknown. He opened to him the cause of his sadness, he described the horrid thoughts that distressed him, and hence ensued, in the cloister of Erfurth, conversations full of wisdom and instruction.

"It is in vain," said the dejected Luther to Staupitz, "that I make promises to God; sin is always too strong for me."

"Oh, my friend," answered the Vicar-general, looking back on his own experience, "I have vowed to the holy God more than a thousand times that I would live a holy life, and never have I kept my vow! I now make no more vows, for I know well I shall not keep them. If God will not be merciful to me for Christ's sake, and grant me a happy death when I leave this world, I cannot, with all my vows and good works, stand before him. I must perish."†

The young monk is terrified at the thought of divine justice. He confesses all his fears. The unspeakable holiness of God—his sovereign majesty fill him with awe. Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when He appeareth?

Staupitz resumed. He knew where he had found peace, and it was in his heart to tell the young man. "Why," said he, "do you distress yourself with these speculations and high thoughts? Look to the

* Prov. xxvii. 9. † L. Opp. (W.) viii. 2725.

wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood which he has shed for you; it is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of the Redeemer. Trust in him,—in the righteousness of his life, in the expiatory sacrifice of his death. Do not shrink from him; God is not against you; it is you who are estranged and averse from God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favour. He says to you, 'You are my sheep; you hear my voice; none shall pluck you out of my hand.'"*

But Luther could not find in himself the repentance he thought necessary to his salvation; he answered (and it is the usual answer of distressed and timid minds,) "How can I dare believe in the favour of God, so long as there is in me no real conversion? I must be changed before He can receive me."

His venerable guide proves to him that there can be no real conversion, so long as man fears God as a severe judge. "What will you say then," cries Luther, "to so many consciences, to whom are prescribed a thousand insupportable penances in order to gain heaven?"

Then he hears this answer from the Vicar-general; —or rather he does not believe that it comes from a man; it seems to him a voice resounding from heaven.† "There is," said Staupitz, "no true repentance but that which begins in the love of God

* L. Opp. (W.) ii. 264.

† Te velut e cœlo sonantem accepimus. (L. Epp. i. 115, ad Staupitium, 30 Maii, 1518.)

and of righteousness.* That which some fancy to be the end of repentance is only its beginning. In order to be filled with the love of that which is good, you must first be filled with the love of God. If you wish to be really converted, do not follow these mortifications and penances. *Love him who has first loved you.*"

Luther listens, and listens again. These consolations fill him with a joy before unknown, and impart to him new light. "It is Jesus Christ," thinks he in his heart; "yes, it is Jesus Christ himself who comforts me so wonderfully by these sweet and salutary words."†

These words, indeed, penetrated the heart of the young monk like a sharp arrow from the bow of a strong man.‡ In order to repentance, *we must love God!* Guided by this new light, he consulted the Scriptures. He looked to all the passages which speak of repentance and conversion. These words, so dreaded hitherto, (to use his own expressions,) become to him an agreeable pastime and the sweetest refreshment. All the passages of Scripture which once alarmed him, seemed now to run to him from all sides, to smile, to spring up and play around him.§

* Pœnitentia vero non est, nisi quæ ab amore justitiæ et Dei incipit, &c. (Ibid.)

† Memini inter jucundissimas et salutares fabulas tuas, quibus me solet Dominus Jesus mirifice consolari. (Ibid.)

‡ Hæsit hoc verbum tuum in me, sicut sagitta potentis acuta. (Ibid.)

§ Ecce jucundissimum ludum; verba undique mihi colludebant planeque huic sententiæ arridebant et assultabant. (L. Epp. i. 115, ad Staupitium, 30 Maii, 1518.)

"Before," he exclaims, "though I carefully dissembled with God as to the state of my heart, and though I tried to express a love for him, which was only a constraint and a mere fiction, there was no word in the Scripture more bitter to me than that of *repentance*. But now there is not one more sweet and pleasant to me.* Oh! how blessed are all God's precepts, when we read them not in books alone, but in the precious wounds of the Saviour."†

However, Luther, though comforted by the words of Staupitz, sometimes relapsed into depression. Sin was again felt in his timid conscience, and then to the joy of salvation, succeeded all his former despair. "Oh, my sin! my sin! my sin!" cried the young monk, one day in the presence of the Vicar-general, and in a tone of the bitterest grief. "Well, would you be only the *semblance* of a sinner," replied the latter, "and have only the *semblance* of a SAVIOUR?" And then Staupitz added with authority: "Know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those even who are *real* and *great sinners*, and deserving of utter condemnation."

It was not only the sin that he found in his heart that troubled Luther: to the doubts of his conscience were added those of his reason. If the holy precepts of the Bible distressed him, some of the doctrines of the divine word increased his distress. The truth, which is the great instrument

* Nunc nihil dulcius aut gratius mihi sonat quam pœnitentia, &c. (Ibid.)

† Ita enim dulcescunt præcepta Dei, quando non in libris tantum, sed in vulneribus dulcissimi Salvatoris legenda intelligimus. (Ibid.)

by means of which God gives peace to man, must necessarily begin by taking from him that false confidence which is his ruin. The doctrine of election especially troubled the young man, and launched him into a field difficult indeed to explore. Must he believe that it was man who first chose God for his portion? or that it was God who first chose man? The Bible, history, daily experience, the writings of Augustine, all had shown him that we must always and in every thing refer in the last case to that sovereign will by which everything exists, and upon which every thing depends. But his ardent mind desired to go farther. He wished to penetrate into the secret counsels of God,—to unveil his mysteries, to see the invisible, and comprehend the incomprehensible. Staupitz checked him. He persuaded him not to attempt to fathom God, who hideth himself; but to confine himself to what He has revealed of his character in Christ. "Look at the wounds of Christ," said he, "and you will there see shining clearly the purpose of God towards men. We cannot understand God out of Christ. 'In Christ you will see what I am and what I require,' hath the Lord said; 'you will not see it elsewhere, either in heaven or on earth.'"*

The Vicar-general did yet more. He brought Luther to acknowlege the fatherly design of God's providence in permitting these temptations and varied struggles with which his soul had to contend. He made him see them in a light well suited to revive his spirit. God prepares for himself by such trials the souls which he destines to some

* L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 489.

important work. We must prove the vessel before we launch it on the mighty deep. If education is necessary for every man, there is a particular education necessary for those who are to influence the generation in which they live. This is what Staupitz represented to the monk of Erfurth. "It is not for nothing," said he, "that God proves you by so many trials; however, you will see, there are great things in which he will make use of you as his minister."

These words, which Luther heard with wonder and humility, filled him with courage, and discovered to him in himself, powers which he had not even suspected. The wisdom and prudence of an enlightened friend gradually revealed the strong man to himself. Staupitz did not stop there. He gave him valuable directions for his studies. He advised him to derive henceforth all his divinity from the Bible, laying aside the systems of the schools. "Let the study of the Scriptures," said he, "be your favourite occupation." Never was better advice, or better followed. But what especially delighted Luther, was the present that Staupitz made him of a Bible. At last he himself possessed that treasure which until that hour he had been obliged to seek either in the library of the University, or at the chain in the convent, or in the cell of a friend. From that time he studied the Scriptures, and especially St. Paul's Epistles, with increasing zeal. His only other reading was the works of St. Augustine. All that he read was powerfully impressed upon his mind. His struggles had prepared him to understand the word. The

soil had been deeply ploughed; the incorruptible seed took deep root. When Staupitz left Erfurth, a new light had arisen upon Luther.

Still the work was not finished. The Vicar-general had prepared it. God reserved the completion of it for a more humble instrument. The conscience of the young Augustine had not yet found repose. His health at last sunk under the exertions and stretch of his mind. He was attacked with a malady that brought him to the gates of the grave. It was then the second year of his abode at the convent. All his anguish and terrors returned in the prospect of death. His own impurity and God's holiness again disturbed his mind. One day when he was overwhelmed with despair, an old monk entered his cell, and spoke kindly to him. Luther opened his heart to him, and acquainted him with the fears that disquieted him. The respectable old man was incapable of entering into all his doubts, as Staupitz had done; but he knew his *Credo*, and he had found *there* something to comfort his own heart. He thought he would apply the same remedy to the young brother. Calling his attention therefore to the Apostles' creed, which Luther had learnt in his early childhood at the school at Mansfeld, the old monk uttered in simplicity this article: "*I believe in the forgiveness of sins.*" These simple words, ingenuously recited by the pious brother at a critical moment, shed sweet consolation in the mind of Luther. "*I* believe," repeated he to himself on his bed of suffering, "I believe the remission of sins." "Ah," said the monk, "you must not only

believe that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven :* the devils believe that. The commandment of God is that we believe *our own sins* are forgiven." How sweet did this commandment appear to poor Luther! "Hear what St. Bernard says in his discourse on the Annunciation," added the old brother. "The testimony which the Holy Ghost applies to your heart is this: '*Thy* sins are forgiven *thee*.'".

From that moment the light shone into the heart of the young monk of Erfurth. The word of Grace was pronounced, and he believed it.—He renounced the thought of meriting salvation;—and trusted himself with confidence to God's grace in Christ Jesus. He did not perceive the consequence of the principle he admitted;—he was still sincerely attached to the Church:—and yet he was thenceforward independent of it; for he had received salvation from God himself; and Romish Catholicism was virtually extinct to him. From that hour Luther went forward;—he sought in the writings of the Apostles and Prophets for all that might strengthen the hope which filled his heart. Every day he implored help from above, and every day new light was imparted to his soul.

This comfort to his spirit restored health to his body. He quickly arose from his sick-bed. He had received new life in more than one sense. The festival of Christmas, which soon after arrived, was to him an occasion of rich enjoyment of all the consolations of faith. He took part in the solemnities

* Davidi aut Petro .... Sed mandatum Dei esse, ut singuli homines nobis remitti peccata credamus.—(Melanc. Vit. L.)

of that sacred season with sweet emotion; and when, in the services of the day, he had to sing these words, "*O beata culpa quæ talem meruisti Redemptorem!*"* his whole soul joyfully responded—*Amen.*

Luther had now been two years in the cloister. The time drew near when he was to be ordained priest. He had received largely; and he looked forward with joy to the liberty afforded, by the priest's office, of freely giving what he had so freely received. He resolved to take advantage of the approaching solemnity, to be perfectly reconciled to his father. He invited him to be present at it, and even asked him to fix the day. John Luther, who had not yet entirely forgiven his son, nevertheless accepted this invitation, and named Sunday, May 2, 1507.

Amongst the number of Luther's friends was John Braun, vicar of Eisenach, who had been his faithful adviser during his abode in that town. Luther wrote to him on the 22d of April: this is the earliest letter extant of the Reformer. It is addressed: "To John Braun, holy and venerable priest of Christ and of Mary."

It is only in the two earliest letters of Luther that the name of the Virgin occurs.

"God, who is glorious and holy in all his works," said the candidate for the priesthood, "having condescended to raise me up, who am but a wretched man, and in every way an unworthy sinner, and to call me, by his alone and most free mercy, to his high and holy ministry, I, that I may testify my gratitude for goodness so divine and munificent,

* Keil, p. 16.

ought (as far as dust and ashes can) to fulfil, with all my heart, the office entrusted to me.

"For this cause, my beloved father, lord, and brother, I ask you, if you have time, and your ecclesiastical and domestic affairs allow it, to deign to assist me by your presence and your prayers, that my sacrifice may be acceptable in the sight of God.

"But I give you notice, that you must come straight to our monastery, and spend some time with us, without seeking any other lodging; you must become an inhabitant of our cells."

At length the day arrived. The miner of Mansfeld did not fail to be present at the consecration of his son. He even gave him an unequivocal proof of his affection and generosity, by making him a present on this occasion, of twenty florins.

The ceremony took place. Jerome, bishop of Brandenburg, officiated. At the moment in which he conferred upon Luther the power of celebrating the mass, he put the cup into his hand, and addressed him in these solemn words: "*Accipe potestatem sacrificandi pro vivis et mortuis*—Receive the power of offering sacrifice for the living and the dead." Luther, at that moment, listened calmly to these words, which granted him power to do the work of the Son of God himself; but, at a later period, they made him shudder. "That the earth did not then swallow us both up," says he, "was an instance of the patience and long-suffering of the Lord."*

His father afterwards dined in the convent with

* L. Opp. xvi. (W.) 1144.

his son, the friends of the young priest, and the monks. The conversation turned on Martin's entrance into the cloister. The brethren commended it as a highly meritorious action; on which the inflexible John, turning to them, remarked: "Have you not read in the scripture, that it is a duty to obey father and mother?" These words struck Luther. They exhibited the action which brought him into the convent in a totally different light; and long afterwards they resounded in his heart.

Luther, after his consecration, acting by the advice of Staupitz, made several short excursions on foot to the parishes and convents of the environs; either to occupy his mind, or for the sake of necessary exercise; or else to accustom himself to preaching.

It had been appointed that Corpus-Christi should be kept with much ceremony at Eisleben. The Vicar-general was to be present: Luther attended. He still felt his need of Staupitz, and took every opportunity of being in the company of that enlightened guide, who helped forward his soul in the way of life. The procession was numerous and gaudy. Staupitz himself carried the host:—Luther followed next in his priestly garments. The thought that Jesus Christ himself was borne before him by the Vicar-general,—the idea that the Lord in person was present,—suddenly struck upon Luther's imagination, and so overawed him, that it was with difficulty he went forward: a cold sweat came over him; he staggered, and thought he should die in the agony of fear:—at last, the procession stopped.

The host which had awakened the monk's terrors was reverently deposited in the sacristy, and Luther, left alone with Staupitz, threw himself into his arms, and confessed the cause of his fear. Then the worthy Vicar-general, who had long known that gracious Saviour who breaks not the bruised reed, gently whispered!—"Dear brother, it was not Jesus Christ; for Christ does not terrify; he ever comforts."*

Luther was not destined to remain hidden in an obscure convent. The time had arrived which was to transfer him to a wider theatre. Staupitz, with whom he still maintained a regular correspondence, was well persuaded that there was in the young monk a spirit too stirring to be confined within a narrow range. He spoke of him to Frederic, the Elector of Saxony; and that enlightened prince invited Luther, in 1508, probably near the close of that year, to become professor at the University of Wittemberg. Wittemberg was the field on which Luther was ordained to fight many a hard battle. He felt himself called thither. He was pressed to repair quickly to his new post. He answered the call immediately; and in the haste of his removal, he had not time even to write to one whom he called his master and well-beloved father, the curate of Eisenach, John Braun. He wrote to him from Wittemberg, a few months after: "My departure was so sudden," said he, "that it was almost unknown to those with whom I was living. It is true, I am at a greater distance, but the better half of me re-

* Es ist nicht Christus, denn Christus schreckt nicht, sondern tröstet nur. (L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 513, & 724.)

mains still with you; and the further I am removed in bodily presence, the more closely my spirit is drawn to you."* Luther had been three years in the cloister of Erfurth.

Arriving at Wittemberg, he repaired to the convent of the Augustines, where a cell was assigned him; for though a professor, he ceased not to be a monk. He was appointed to teach physics and dialectics. This appointment was probably conferred upon him in consideration of his philosophical studies at Erfurth, and his degree of master of arts. Thus Luther, who was then hungering and thirsting for the word of God, was obliged to apply himself almost exclusively to the scholastic philosophy of Aristotle. He felt the need of that bread of life which God gives to the world; and he was forced to bury himself in mere human subtleties. Hard necessity! how did he sigh under it! "I am very well, by God's favour," wrote he to Braun, "but that I am compelled to give my whole attention to philosophy. From the moment of my arrival at Wittemberg I have longed to exchange that study for theology; but," added he, lest he should be thought to mean the theology of that age, "I mean that theology which seeks the kernel of the nut, the pulp of the wheat, the marrow of the bone.† However things may go, God is God," continued he with that confidence which was the life of his soul, "man almost always errs in his judgment; but this is our God for ever

* Epp. i. p. 5.—17th March, 1509.

† Theologia quæ nucleum nucis et medullam tritici et medullam ossium scrutatur.—(L. Epp. i. 6.)

and ever; he will be our guide unto death." The labours that were then imposed upon Luther were at a later period of great use in enabling him to combat the errors of the schools.

He could not rest there. The desire of his heart was destined to be fulfilled. That same power, which some years before had driven Luther from the bar to a religious life, now impelled him to the Bible. He applied himself zealously to the study of the ancient languages, especially the Greek and Hebrew, that he might draw knowledge and doctrine from the fountain head. He was, through life, indefatigable in his studies.* Some months after his arrival at the university he solicited the degree of bachelor in divinity. He obtained it at the end of March, 1509, with a particular direction to Biblical theology.

Every day at one o'clock Luther was expected to discourse upon the Bible; a precious hour for the professor and the pupils, and which always gave them deeper insight into the divine sense of those discoveries so long lost to the people and to the schools.

He began these lectures, by explaining the Psalms, and he soon passed to the Epistles to the Romans. It was especially in meditating upon this book that the light of truth entered his heart. In the retirement of his tranquil cell, he devoted whole hours to the study of the divine word, with St. Paul's Epistle open before him. One day having proceeded as far as the 17th verse of the first chapter, he there

* In studiis litterarum corpore ac mente indefessus. (Pallavicini Hist. Concil. Trid. 1. p. 16.)

read this passage of the prophet Habakkuk: "*The just shall live by faith.*" The precept strikes him. There is then for the just another life than that possessed by the rest of men; and this life is the fruit of faith. This word, which he receives into his heart as if God himself had planted it there, discloses to him the mystery of the christian life, and increases that life in his soul. In the midst of his struggles in after life, the words often recurred to him, "The just shall live by faith."*

The lectures of Luther, with such a preparation, were very different from any that had been heard before. It was not now an eloquent rhetorician, or a pedantic schoolman who spoke; it was a christian who had experienced the power of revealed truths; who derived them from the Bible; who drew them from the treasury of his own heart, and presented them in full life to his astonished auditors. It was no longer man's teaching, but God's.

This altogether new way of exhibiting the truth made some noise; the rumour of it spread far, and attracted to the newly-founded university a crowd of young foreign students. Several even of the professors attended Luther's lectures, and amongst others, the celebrated Martin Pollich of Mellerstadt, doctor of physic, law, and philosophy, who, with Staupitz, had organized the university of Wittemberg, and had been its first rector. Mellerstadt, who has been often called "the light of the world," modestly mixed with the pupils of the new professor. "This monk," said he, "will put all the doctors to the rout; he will introduce a new

* Seckend. p. 55.

style of doctrine, and will reform the whole Church: he builds upon the word of Christ; and no one in this world can either resist or overthrow that word, though it should be attacked with all the weapons of Philosophers, Sophists, Scotists, Albertists, and Thomists."*

Staupitz, who was as the hand of Providence to develop the gifts and treasures that lay hidden in Luther, invited him to preach in the church of the Augustines. The young professor shrunk from this proposal. He wished to confine himself to his academical duties; he trembled at the thought of adding to them those of public preaching. In vain Staupitz entreated him: "No, no," replied he, "it is no light thing to speak to men in God's stead."† An affecting instance of humility in this great Reformer of the Church! Staupitz persisted. "But the ingenious Luther found," says one of his historians, "fifteen arguments, pretexts, or evasions, to excuse himself from this summons." At last, the chief of the Augustines, still persevering in his application: "Ah, worthy doctor," said Luther, "it would be the death of me. I could not stand it three months." "And what then," replied the Vicar-general; "in God's name so be it; for in heaven also the Lord requires devoted and able servants." Luther was obliged to yield.

In the middle of the square of Wittemberg stood an old wooden chapel, thirty feet long and twenty broad, whose walls, propped on all sides, were falling to ruins. A pulpit, made of planks, raised

* Melch. Adam. Vita Lutheri, p. 104.

† Fabricius, Centifolium Lutheri, p. 33.—Mathesius, p. 6.

three feet above the ground, received the preacher. It was in this chapel that the Reformation was first preached. It was the will of God that this work for the restoration of his glory should have the humblest beginnings. The foundation of the church of the Augustines was only just laid, and till it should be completed they made use of this mean place of worship. "That building," adds the contemporary of Luther, who relates these circumstances, "may be aptly compared to the stable in which Christ was born.* It was in that poor enclosure that God willed, if we may so speak, that his well-beloved Son should be born a second time. Amongst the thousand cathedrals and parish churches with which the world was filled, not one was chosen for the glorious announcement of everlasting life."

Luther preached: every thing was striking in the new preacher. His expressive countenance and dignified demeanour, his clear and sonorous voice, charmed the audience. Before his time, the greater number of preachers had sought to amuse their hearers rather than to convert them. The deep seriousness that marked the preaching of Luther, and the joy with which the knowledge of the Gospel filled his own heart gave to his eloquence an authority, energy, and unction, which none of his predecessors had possessed. "Gifted with a ready and lively intelligence," says one of his adversaries,† "having a retentive memory, and speaking his mother tongue with remarkable fluency, Luther was surpassed in eloquence by none of his contem-

*. Myconius. † Florimond Raymond, Hist. hæres. cap. 5.

poraries. Addressing his hearers from his place in the pulpit, as if he had been agitated by some powerful passion, and adapting his action to the words, he affected their minds in a surprising manner, and carried them like a torrent whither he would. So much power, action, and eloquence, are rarely found amongst the people of the north." "He had," said Bossuet, "a lively and impetuous eloquence, which delighted and captivated his auditory."

In a short time the little chapel could no longer contain the crowds that flocked thither. The council of Wittemberg then chose Luther for their preacher, and called upon him to preach in the church of that city. The impression which he there produced was still greater. His wonderful genius, his eloquent style, and the excellency of the doctrines he proclaimed, equally astonished his auditors. His reputation spread far and wide, and Frederic the Wise himself came once to Wittemberg to hear him.

It was as if a new existence was opening for Luther. To the drowsiness of the cloister had succeeded a life of active exertion. Freedom, employment, earnest and regular action completed the re-establishment of harmony and peace in his spirit. He was now at last in his proper place, and the work of God was about to open out its majestic course. Luther was continuing his teaching both in the hall of the academy and in the church, when he was interrupted in his labours. In 1510, or according to some, not till 1511 or 1512, he was despatched to

* Bossuet, Hist. des Variations, l. 1.

Rome. A difference had arisen between seven convents of his order and the Vicar-general.* Luther's acuteness, eloquence, and talents in discussion led to his being chosen to represent these seven monasteries.† This dispensation of divine Providence was needed. It was fit that Luther should know what Rome was. Full of the prejudices and illusions of the cloister, he had always pictured it to himself as the seat of holiness.

He set out; he crossed the Alps. But hardly had he descended into the plains of rich and voluptuous Italy than he found at every step matter of surprise and scandal. The poor German monk was entertained at a wealthy convent of the Benedictines, situate on the Po, in Lombardy. This convent enjoyed a revenue of thirty-six thousand ducats; twelve thousand were spent for the table, twelve thousand on the buildings, and twelve thousand to supply the other wants of the monks.‡ The magnificence of the apartments, the richness of the dresses, and the delicacy of the viands, astonished Luther. Marble, silk, and luxury of every kind; —what a novel spectacle to the humble brother of the convent of Wittemberg! He was amazed and silent; but Friday came, and what was his surprise! The table of the Benedictines was spread with abundance of meats. Then he found courage to speak out. "The Church," said he, "and the Pope forbid such things." The Benedictines were

* Quod septem conventus a vicario in quibusdam dissentirent. (Cochlæus, 2.)

† Quod esset acer ingenio et ad contradicendum audax et vehemens. (Ibid.)

‡ L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 1468.

offended at this rebuke from the unmannerly German. But Luther, having repeated his remark, and perhaps threatened to report their irregularity, some of them thought it easiest to get rid of their troublesome guest. The porter of the convent hinted to him that he incurred danger by his stay. He accordingly took his departure from this epicurean monastery, and pursued his journey to Bologna, where he fell sick.* Some have seen in this sickness the effects of poison. It is more probable that the change in his mode of living disordered the frugal monk of Wittemberg, who had been used to subsist for the most part on dry bread and herrings. This sickness was not "unto death," but for the glory of God. His constitutional sadness and depression returned. What a fate was before him, to perish thus far away from Germany under a scorching sun, in a foreign land. The distress of mind he had experienced at Erfurth again oppressed him. A sense of his sins disturbed him; and the prospect of the judgment of God, filled him with dismay. But in the moment when his terror was at its height that word of Paul, "*The just shall live by Faith,*" recurred with power to his thought, and beamed upon his soul like a ray from heaven. Raised and comforted, he rapidly regained health, and again set forth for Rome, expecting to find there a very different manner of life from that of the Lombard convents, and eager to efface, by the contemplation of Roman sanctity, the sad impression left upon his memory by his sojourn on the banks of the Po.

* Matth. Dresser Hist. Lutheri.

At last, after a fatiguing journey under the burning sun of Italy, he approached the seven-hilled city. His heart was moved within him. His eyes longed to behold the queen of the earth and of the Church! As soon as he discovered from a distance the Eternal City,—the city of St. Peter and St. Paul, the metropolis of the Catholic World, he threw himself on the earth, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee!"

Luther was now in Rome; the professor of Wittemberg was in the midst of the eloquent ruins of the Rome of Consuls and of Emperors, the Rome of Confessors of Christ and of Martyrs. *There* had lived Plautus and Virgil, whose works he had carried with him into his cloister; and all those great men whose history had so often stirred his heart. He beheld their statues, and the ruined monuments which still attested their glory. But, all this glory and power had passed away. He trod under foot the dust of them. He called to mind, at every step he took, the melancholy presentiments of Scipio, when, shedding tears over the ruins of Carthage, its palaces in flames, and its walls broken down, he exclaimed: "*It will one day be thus with Rome!*" "And truly," said Luther, "the Rome of Scipios and Cæsars is but a corpse. There are such heaps of ruin that the foundations of the houses rest at this hour where once their roofs were. *There*," said he, turning a melancholy look on its ruins, "*there* were once the riches and treasures of this world!"* All these fragments of wreck which his foot encountered whispered to Luther, within

* L. Opp. (W.) xxii. 2374, 2377.

Rome herself, that what is strongest in the sight of men may be destroyed by the breath of the Lord.

But with these profaner ruins were mixed holy ashes: the thought of this came to his mind. The burial places of the martyrs are hard by those of Roman generals and conquerors. Christian Rome, and her trials, had more power over the heart of the Saxon Monk, than Pagan Rome with all her glory. In this very place arrived that epistle wherein Paul wrote, "*the just shall live by faith.*" He is not far from the forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. In that spot was the house of Narcissus; here stood the palace of Cæsar, where the Lord delivered the Apostle from the jaws of the lion. Oh, how did these recollections strengthen the heart of the monk of Wittemberg!

Rome then presented a widely different aspect. The warlike Julius II. filled the pontifical chair, and not Leo X. as some distinguished historians of Germany have said, doubtless for want of attention. Luther often related an incident of this Pope's life. When the news was brought him that his army had been defeated by the French before Ravenna, he was reading his prayers; he threw the book on the floor, exclaiming, with a dreadful oath, "Well, now thou art become a Frenchman.—Is it thus thou guardest thy church?" Then, turning himself in the direction of the country to whose arms he thought to have recourse, he uttered these words, "Holy Swiss! pray for us."* Ignorance, levity, and dissolute morals, a profane contempt of everything

* Sancte Swizere! ora pro nobis. (L. Opp. (W.) xxii. 1314, 1332.)

sacred, and a shameful traffic in divine things; such was the spectacle presented by this wretched city. Yet the pious monk continued for awhile in his illusions.

Having arrived about the period of the festival of St. John, he heard the Romans repeating around him a proverb current among the people: "Blessed is that mother," said they, "whose son says mass on St. John's eve." Oh, thought Luther, how gladly would I make my mother blessed. The pious son of Margaret made some attempts to say mass on that day, but he could not, the crowd was too great.*

Warm in his feeling, and confiding in disposition, he visited all the churches and chapels, gave credit to all the marvellous stories there told him, went through with devotion the observances required, and was pleased at being able to perform so many pious acts, from which his friends at home were debarred. "How do I regret," thought the pious monk, "that my father and mother are still living: how happy should I be to deliver them from the fire of purgatory by my masses, my prayers, and other admirable works."† He had found the light; but the darkness was far from being wholly chased from his mind; he had the faith and love of the Gospel, but not the knowledge of it. It was no easy matter to emerge from that deep gloom that had for so many ages overspread the earth.

Luther said mass several times at Rome. He went through it with all the unction and dignity that such an act seemed to him to require. But how

* L. Opp. (W.) Dedication of the 117 Psm. VI. vol. L. g.
† Ibid.

was the heart of the Saxon monk distressed, when he saw the profane and heartless formality with which the Roman clergy celebrated this Sacrament! The priests, on their part, laughed at his simplicity. One day, when he was officiating, he found that at the altar they had read seven masses while he was reading one. "Quick! quick!" said one of the priests, "send *Our Lady* her Son back speedily;"—thus impiously alluding to the transubstantiation of the bread into the body and blood of Christ. Another time Luther had only got as far as the Gospel, when the priest who was at his side had already finished the mass: "Make haste, make haste!" whispered the latter, "do have done with it."*

His astonishment was still greater, when he found, in the dignitaries of the Church, the same corruption he had observed in the inferior clergy. He had hoped better things of them.

It was the fashion at the papal court to attack Christianity; and a person was not counted a man of sense, if he did not hold some eccentric and heretical opinion in relation to the dogmas of the Church.† Some would have convinced Erasmus, by certain passages from Pliny, that there was no difference between the souls of men and of beasts; and there were young courtiers of the Pope, who affirmed that the orthodox faith was the growth of the cunning invention of the saints.

Luther's office of envoy from the Augustines of Ger-

* L. Opp. (W.) xix. von der Winkelnesse, &c.

† In quel tempo non pareva fosse galantuomo e buon cortegiano colui che de dogmi della chiesa non aveva qualche opinion erronea ed heretica. (Caracciola Vit. MS. Paul IV.) cited by Rancke.

many, procured him invitations to several meetings of distinguished ecclesiastics. One day, in particular, he was at table with several prelates: the latter exhibited openly their buffoonery in manners and impious conversation; and did not scruple to give utterance before him to many indecent jokes, doubtless thinking him one like themselves. They related, amongst other things, laughing, and priding themselves upon it, how when saying mass at the altar, instead of the sacramental words which were to transform the elements into the body and blood of the Saviour, they pronounced over the bread and wine these sarcastic words: "Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain; wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain—*Panis es et panis manebis; vinum es et vinum manebis.*" "Then," continued they, "we elevate the pyx, and all the people worship." Luther could scarcely believe his ears. His mind, gifted with much vivacity, and even gaiety, in the society of his friends, was remarkable for gravity when treating of serious things. These Romish mockeries shocked him. "I," says he, "was a serious and pious young monk; such language deeply grieved me. If at Rome they speak thus openly at table, thought I, what, if their actions should correspond with their words, and popes, cardinals, and courtiers should thus say mass. And I, who have so often heard them recite it so devoutly, how, in that case, must I have been deceived?"

Luther often mixed with the monks and citizens of Rome. If some amongst them extolled the Pope and the clergy, the greater number gave free

vent to their complaints and sarcasms. What stories had they to tell of the reigning Pope, of Alexander VI., and of so many others! One day, his Roman friends related, how Cæsar Borgia having fled from Rome, had been taken in Spain. On the eve of trial, he prayed for mercy, and asked for a priest to visit him in his prison. They sent him a monk. He murdered him, disguised himself in his cowl, and effected his escape. "I heard that at Rome: it is a thing well known," says Luther.* Another day, passing along a principal street that led to St. Peter's church, he stopped in astonishment before a statue, representing a pope, under the figure of a woman holding a sceptre, clothed in the papal mantle, and bearing a child in her arms. "It is a girl of Mentz," said the people, "who was chosen Pope by the Cardinals, and was delivered of a child on this spot: therefore no pope ever passes through this street." "I wonder," observed Luther, "that the popes allow the statue to remain."†

Luther had expected to find the edifice of the church encompassed with splendour and strength; but its doors were broken in, and its walls consumed by fire. He saw the desolation of the sanctuary, and drew back in alarm. He had dreamed of sanctity; he found nothing but profanation.

He was not less struck with the disorders committed in the city. "The police is strict and severe at Rome," said he. "The judge, or capitan rides through the city every night, with three hun-

* Das habe ich zu Rom für gewiss gehort.—(Table Talk, p. 1322.)

† Es nimmt mich Wunder dass die Pabste solches Bild leiden können.—(Ibid. p. 1320.)

dred attendants. He stops all he finds in the streets; if he meets an armed man, he hangs him or throws him into the Tiber. And yet the city is full of disorders and murders; whilst, in places where the word of God is truly and faithfully preached, we see peace and order prevail, without the necessity for law or severity."* "It is incredible what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome," he says again; "they must be seen and heard to be believed. So that it is usual to say: 'If there be a hell, Rome is built above it; it is an abyss from whence all sins proceed.'"†

This sight made at the time a great impression on Luther's mind; an impression which was afterwards deepened. "The nearer we approach to Rome, the greater number of bad Christians do we find," said he several years after. "It is commonly observed, that he who goes to Rome for the first time, goes to seek a knave there; the second time, he finds him; and the third time, he brings him away with him under his cloak. But now, people are become so clever, that they make the three journies in one."‡ One of the most profound geniuses of Italy, though of deplorable celebrity, Macchiavelli, who was living at Florence when Luther passed through that city to go to Rome, has made a similar remark: "The greatest symptom," said he, "of the approaching ruin of Christianity, (by which he meant the Roman Catholic religion,)

* L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 2376.

† Address to the Christian Nobles of Germany.

‡ Ist irgend eine Hœlle, so muss Rom darauf gebaut seyn. (Ib. 2377.)

is, that the nearer we approach the capital of Christendom, the less do we find of the Christian spirit in the people. The scandalous example and the crimes of the court of Rome have caused Italy to lose every principle of piety and every religious sentiment. We Italians," continues the great historian, "are principally indebted to the Church, and to the priests, for having become impious and profligate."* Luther felt, later in life, all the importance of this journey: "If any one would give me a hundred thousand florins," said he, "I would not have missed seeing Rome."†

This journey was also of advantage to him in regard to learning. Like Reuchlin, Luther profited by his residence in Italy, to obtain a deeper understanding of the Holy Scriptures. He there took lessons in Hebrew from a celebrated rabbin, named Elias Levita. He acquired partly at Rome the knowledge of that divine word under the assault of which Rome was doomed to fall.

But this journey was above all of great importance to Luther in another respect. Not only was the veil withdrawn, and the sardonic laugh, the jesting incredulity, which lay concealed behind the Romish superstitions, revealed to the future Reformer; but also the living faith which God had implanted in him was then powerfully strengthened.

We have seen how he had at first submitted to all the vain practices which the church enjoins in order to purchase the remission of sins. One day, in particular, wishing to obtain an indulgence

* Diss. on the 1st Decade of Livy.

† L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 2374.

promised by the Pope to any one who should ascend on his knees what is called *Pilate's staircase*, the poor Saxon monk was slowly climbing those steps which they told him had been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Rome. But whilst he was going through this meritorious work, he thought he heard a voice like thunder speaking from the depth of his heart: "*The just shall live by faith.*" These words, which already on two occasions had struck upon his ear as the voice of an angel of God, resounded instantaneously and powerfully within him. He started up in terror on the steps up which he had been crawling; he was horrified at himself; and, struck with shame for the degradation to which superstition had debased him, he fled from the scene of his folly.*

This powerful text had a mysterious influence on the life of Luther. It was a creative word for the Reformer and for the Reformation. It was by means of that word that God then said: "Let there be light, and there was light."

It is frequently necessary that a truth should be repeatedly presented to our minds, in order to produce its due effect. Luther had often studied the Epistle to the Romans, and yet never had justification by faith, as there taught, appeared so clear to him. He now understood that righteousness which alone can stand in the sight of God; he was now partaker of that perfect obedience of Christ which God imputes freely to the sinner as soon as he looks in humility to the God-man crucified. This was

* Seck. p. 56.

the decisive epoch in the inward life of Luther. That faith which had saved him from the fear of death became henceforward the soul of his theology; a strong-hold in every danger, giving power to his preaching and strength to his charity, constituting a ground of peace, a motive to service, and a consolation in life and death.

But this great doctrine of a salvation which proceeds from God and not from man, was not merely the power of God unto salvation to Luther, it also became the power of God to reform the Church. It was the same weapon which the Apostles had once wielded, and now, after long disuse, it was drawn forth in its original brightness from the arsenal of Almighty God. At the moment when Luther started from his knees, transported with emotion at that word which St. Paul had addressed to the inhabitants of Rome, the truth, hitherto held captive and fettered in the Church, stood up also to fall no more.

We must here quote his own words. "Though as a monk I was holy and irreproachable," says he, "my conscience was still filled with trouble and torment. I could not endure the expression—the righteous justice of God. I did not love that just and holy Being who punishes sinners. I felt a secret anger against him; I hated him because, not satisfied with terrifying by his law, and by the miseries of life, poor creatures already ruined by original sin, he aggravated our sufferings by the Gospel. But when by the Spirit of God, I understood these words,—when I learnt how the justification of the sinner proceeds from God's mere mercy by the way

of faith,*—then I felt myself born again as a new man, and I entered by an opened door into the very paradise of God.† From that hour I saw the precious and holy Scriptures with new eyes. I went through the whole Bible. I collected a multitude of passages which taught me what the work of God was. And as I had before heartily hated that expression, 'the righteousness of God,' I began from that time to value and to love it, as the sweetest and most consolatory truth. Truly this text of St. Paul was to me as the very gate of heaven."

Hence it was, that, when he was called upon on some solemn occasions to confess this doctrine, it ever roused his enthusiasm and rough eloquence. "I see," said he in a critical moment,‡ "that the devil, by means of his teachers and doctors, is incessantly attacking this fundamental article, and that he cannot rest to cease from this object. Well, then, I, Doctor Martin Luther, an unworthy evangelist of our Lord Jesus Christ, do confess this article, 'that faith alone, without works, justifies in the sight of God, and I declare, that in spite of the emperor of the Romans, the emperor of the Turks, the emperor of the Tartars, the emperor of the Persians, the Pope, all the cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, kings, princes, nobles, all the world, and all the devils, it shall stand unshaken for ever! that if they will persist in opposing this

* Quâ vos Deus mesericors justificat per fidem. (L. Opp. lat.)

† Hic me prorsus renatum esse sensi et apertis portis in ipsum paradisum intrasse. (Ibid.)

‡ Gloss on the Imperial Edict, 1531. (L. Opp. (L.) tom. xx.)

truth, they will draw upon their heads the flames of hell. This is the true and holy gospel, and the declaration of me, Doctor Luther, according to the light given to me by the Holy Spirit. . . . There is no one," he continues, "who has died for our sins, but Jesus Christ the Son of God. I repeat it once more: let all the evil spirits of earth and hell foam and rage as they will, this is nevertheless true. And if Christ alone takes away sin, we cannot do so by all our works. But good works follow redemption,—as surely as fruit appears upon a living tree. This is our doctrine, this the Holy Spirit teacheth, together with all holy christian people. We hold it in God's name. Amen!"

It was thus that Luther discovered what hitherto even the most illustrious teachers and reformers had overlooked. It was in Rome that God gave him this clear view of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. He had come to seek, in that city of the Pontiffs, the solution of some difficulties concerning a monastic order; he brought back in his heart that which was to emancipate the Church.

Luther left Rome and returned to Wittemberg, full of grief and indignation. Turning away his eyes in disgust from the pontifical city, he directed them trustfully to the Holy Scriptures, and to that new life which the word of God seemed then to offer to the world. This word gained ground in his heart in proportion as the Church lost its hold upon him. He disengaged himself from the one to turn toward the other. All the Reformation was com-

prised in that change; for it put God in the place the priest had usurped.

Staupitz and the Elector did not lose sight of the monk they had called to the university of Wittemberg. It seems as if the Vicar-general had a presentiment of the work that was to be accomplished in the world, and that finding it too hard for him, he desired to urge Luther to undertake it. Nothing is more remarkable, or perhaps more inexplicable, than the character of the man who was ever ready to impel the monk onward in the path to which God called him, and yet himself went and ended his days sadly in a convent. The preaching of the young professor had made an impression on the prince; he admired the strength of his understanding, the power of his eloquence, and the excellency of the subjects that he handled.* The Elector and his friends, wishing to promote a man of such great promise, resolved to raise him to the distinction of doctor of divinity. Staupitz repaired to the convent. He led Luther into the cloister garden, and there talking with him alone under a tree, which Luther afterwards took pleasure in pointing out to his disciples,† the venerable father said to him: "My friend, you must now become Doctor of the Holy Scriptures." Luther drew back. The thought of this distinguished honour overcame him. "Seek one more worthy of it," said he; "for my part, I cannot consent to it." The Vicar-general pressed the point. "The Lord has much to do in

* Vim ingenii, nervos orationis, ac rerum bonitatem expositarum in concionibus admiratus fuerat. (Melancthon. Vita Luth.)

† Unter einem Baum den er mir und andern gezeigt. (Math. 6.)

the Church, he requires just now young and vigorous doctors." "This was said perhaps jestingly," adds Melancthon, "yet the event corresponded to it, for usually many presages announce great revolutions."* There is no reason to suppose that Melancthon here speaks of prophecy, strictly so called. The last century, though remarkable for incredulity, saw this exemplified:—how many presages, without miracle, preceded the revolution at the close of that century!

"But I am weak and ailing," said Luther; "I have not long to live. Look for a strong man." "The Lord has work in heaven as in earth; dead or alive, God requires you."†

"The Holy Spirit alone can make a doctor of divinity,"‡ exclaimed the monk, more and more overcome with fear. "Do as your convent desires," said Staupitz, "and what I your Vicar-General require you to do, for you have promised to obey us." "But think of my poverty," resumed the friar, "I have nothing wherewith to pay the expenses incident to such a promotion." "Do not make yourself uneasy about that," said his friend, "the prince is so kind as to take the charges upon himself." Urged on all sides, Luther was obliged to submit.

It was toward the summer of 1512, Luther set out for Leipsic to receive from the treasurers of the

* Multa præcedunt mutationes præsagia. (Vita Luth.)

† Ihr lebet nun oder sterbet, so darff euch Gott in seinem Rathe. (Math. 6.)

‡ Neminem nisi Spiritum Sanctum creare posse doctorem theologiæ. (Weismanni Hist. Eccles. i. p. 1404.)

Elector, the money requisite on his promotion. But, according to court custom, the money did not arrive. Luther, becoming impatient, wished to depart; but the obedience becoming the character of a monk restrained him. At last, on the 4th of October, he received from Pfeffinger and John Doltzig, fifty florins. He gave them a receipt, in which he assumed no other designation than monk. "I, Martin," said he, "brother of the order of the Eremites."* Luther hastened back to Wittemberg.

Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt was at that time the Dean of the Faculty of Theology. Carlstadt is the name under which this doctor is best known. He was also called the A. B. C. Melancthon first gave him that name, alluding to the three initials of his name. Bodenstein acquired in his native country the first elements of education. He was of grave and sombre character,—perhaps inclined to jealousy, of unquiet temper, but very eager for learning, and gifted with great capacity. He visited several universities to enlarge his knowledge, and studied theology at Rome itself. On his return from Italy to Germany, he established himself at Wittemberg, and there became doctor of theology. At this time, as he himself afterwards declared, he had not read the Holy Scriptures.† This trait gives a very just idea of what then constituted theology. Carlstadt, besides his functions as professor, was canon and archdeacon. This was the man who was, one day, to divide the Reformation. He then saw in Luther only an inferior; but

* L. Epp. i. 11. † Weismann. Hist. Eccles. p. 1416.

the Augustine soon became an object of his jealousy. One day he remarked, "I will not be less distinguished than Luther."* Far from anticipating at this time the future greatness of the young professor, Carlstadt conferred on his destined rival the first degree of the university.

On the 18th October, 1512, Luther was made licentiate in theology, and took the following oath:

"I swear to defend the truth of the Gospel with all my strength."† The following day, Bodenstein solemnly delivered to him, in presence of a numerous assembly, the insignia of Doctor in Theology.

He was made Biblical Doctor, and not Doctor of Sentences, and was therefore specially bound to devote himself to the study of the Bible, instead of human traditions. Then it was, as he himself tells us, that he espoused his well-beloved and Holy Scriptures.‡ He promised to preach them faithfully, to teach them in purity, to study them all his life, and to defend them so far as God should enable him, by disputation, and by writing against false teachers.§

This solemn vow was to Luther his vocation as a Reformer. Binding upon his conscience the sacred obligation to investigate freely, and declare openly evangelical truth, that oath lifted the new made doctor above the narrow bounds to which his monastic vow might have restricted him. Called by the University, by his Sovereign, in the name of

* Weisman. Hist. Eccles. p. 1416.

† Juro me veritatem evangelicam viriliter defensurum.

‡ Doctor biblicus *non* sententiarius. (Melancth.)

§ L. Opp. (W.) xvi. p. 2061.—Mathesius, p. 7.

the Imperial Majesty, and of the Roman See itself, and bound before God, by the most sacred of oaths, he was from that time the intrepid herald of the word of life.—On that memorable day Luther was installed Champion of the Bible.

Therefore it is that this oath pledged to the Holy Scriptures may be regarded as one of the immediate causes of the revival of the Church. The infallible authority of the word of God was the first and fundamental principle of the Reformation. Every reform in detail afterwards effected in doctrine, morals, church government, and public worship was but a consequence of this first principle. In these days we can hardly imagine the sensation produced by this elementary truth, so simple, yet for ages neglected. A few men, of more enlarged discernment than the vulgar, alone foresaw its important consequences. Speedily the courageous voices of all the Reformers proclaimed this powerful principle, at the sound of which the influence of Rome crumbled into the dust: "Christians receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the express words of Christ, the apostles and prophets. No man, nor any assembly of men, has power to prescribe new doctrines."

The situation of Luther was changed. The call he had received became to the Reformer as one of those extraordinary commissions which the Lord entrusted to prophets under the old dispensation, and to apostles under the new. The solemn engagement he had contracted, made so profound an impression on his soul, that the recollection of this vow sufficed at a later period to comfort him in the

midst of the greatest dangers and the rudest conflicts. And when he saw all Europe agitated and disturbed by the doctrine he had proclaimed,—when the accusations of Rome, the reproaches of many pious men, and the doubts and fears of his own heart (so easily moved,) might have caused him to falter, to fear, and fall into despondency, he called to mind the oath he had taken, and remained firm, tranquil, and rejoicing. "I came forward," said he, "in a critical moment, and I put myself into the Lord's hands. Let his will be done. Who asked of him that he would make me a teacher? If he has made me such, let him support me;—or if he change his purpose, let him deprive me. This tribulation then does not intimidate me. I seek but one thing—to have his favour in all he calls me to do in his work." Another time he said, "He who undertakes anything without a divine call seeks his own glory. But I, Doctor Martin Luther, was constrained to become a Doctor. The Papacy endeavoured to stop me in the discharge of my duty, but you see what has happened to it;—and much worse shall yet befall it;—they cannot defend themselves against me. By God's help I am resolved to press on, to force a passage through, and trample dragons and vipers under foot. This will begin in my lifetime, and finish after I am gone."*

From the hour of this oath Luther no longer sought the truth for himself alone, but for the Church. Still retaining his recollections of Rome, he perceived indistinctly before him a path in which he purposed to go forward with all the energy

* L. Opp. (W.) xxi. 2061.

of his soul. The spiritual life, which hitherto had grown up within him, began to manifest itself in outward action. This was the third period of his progress. His entrance into the convent had turned his thoughts towards God; the knowledge of the remission of sins, and of the righteousness of faith, had delivered his soul from bondage. The oath he had now taken had given him that baptism by fire which constituted him the Reformer of the Church.

The first adversaries he attacked were those celebrated schoolmen whom he had studied so deeply, and who then reigned supreme in every university. He accused them of Pelagianism; boldly opposing Aristotle (the father of the school) and Thomas Aquinas, he undertook to hurl them from the throne whence they exercised so commanding an influence, the one over philosophy, and the other over theology.*

"Aristotle, Porphyry, the theologians of the sentences," said he, writing to Lange, "these are the unprofitable study of this age. I desire nothing more ardently than to lay open before all eyes this false system, which has tricked the Church, by covering itself with a Greek mask; and to expose its worthlessness before the world."† In all his public disputations he was accustomed to repeat—"The writings of the Apostles and Prophets are more certain and sublime than all the sophisms and theology of the schools." Such language was new, but gradually people became familiarized with it; and about one year after this he was able

* Aristotelem in philosophicis, Sanctum Thomam in theologicis, evertendos, susceperat. (Pallav. i. 16.)

† Perdita studia nostri sæculi. (Epp. i. 15. 8 Feb. 1516.)

exultingly to write, "God works amongst us; our theology and St. Augustine make wonderful progress, and are already paramount in our university. Aristotle is on the wane, and already totters to his fall, which is near at hand and irreversible. The lectures on the Sentences are received with utter distaste. None can hope for hearers unless he profess the scriptural theology."* Happy the university where such testimony could be given!

At the same time that Luther attacked Aristotle, he took part with Erasmus and Reuchlin against their enemies. He entered into correspondence with those great men and others of the learned, such as Pirckheimer, Mutian, Hütten, who belonged more or less to the same party. He formed also at this period another friendship, which was yet more important in its influence on his after life.

There was then at the court of the Elector a person remarkable for wisdom and candour. This was George Spalatin, a native of Spaltus, or Spalt, in the bishopric of Eichstadt. He had been curate of the village of Hohenkirch, near the forests of Thuringia. He was afterwards chosen by Frederic the Wise as his secretary and chaplain, and private teacher of his nephew, John Frederic, heir of the electoral crown. Spalatin was a man of simple manners, in the midst of a court; timid in emergencies, and circumspect and prudent as his master;† contrasting with the energetic Luther, with whom he was in daily communication. Like Staupitz, he was fitted rather for peaceable than for stirring

* Ep. i. 57. May 18, 1517.

† Secundum genium heri sui. Weismann. Hist. Eccles. p. 1434.

times. Such men are necessary: they are like that soft covering in which we wrap jewels and crystals, to protect them from injury in transporting them from place to place. They seem of no use, and yet without them the precious gems would be broken or lost. Spalatin was not capable of great actions, but he faithfully and noiselessly discharged the task assigned to him.* He was at first one of the principal aids of his master in collecting those relics of the saints of which Frederic was long an amateur. But by slow degrees he, like his master, turned toward the truth. The faith which was then reappearing in the Church did not so suddenly lay hold on him as on Luther,—he was led on by more circuitous paths. He became the friend of Luther at the court, the agent through which matters of business were transacted between the Reformer and the Princes, the go-between of the Church and the State. The Elector honoured Spalatin with the closest intimacy, and in his journies admitted him to share his carriage.† In other respects the air of the court was often oppressive to the worthy Spalatin, and affected him with deep sadness; he would have wished to leave all these honours, and again to become a simple pastor in the woods of Thuringia. But Luther comforted him, and persuaded him to remain at his post. Spalatin acquired general esteem. The princes and scholars of his age evinced the sincerest respect for him. Erasmus was accus-

* Fideliter et sine strepitu fungens. (Weismann. Hist. Eccles. p. 1434.)

† Qui cum principe in rheda sive lectico solitus est ferri. (Corp. Ref. i. 33.)

tomed to say, "The name of Spalatin is inscribed not only as one of my dearest friends, but of my most revered protectors, and that not on paper, but on my heart."*

The affair of Reuchlin and the monks was then making much noise in Germany. The most pious persons often hesitated which side to take, for the monks were bent upon destroying the Jewish books which contained blasphemies against Christ. The Elector commissioned his chaplain to consult the doctor of Wittemberg, whose reputation was considerable. Luther replied by letter, and it is the earliest of his letters to the court preacher.

"What shall I say? these monks pretend to expel Beelzebub,—but it is not by the finger of God. I never cease to complain and grieve at it. We Christians begin to be wise in things that are without, and senseless at home.† There are, in all the public places of our Jerusalem, blasphemies a hundred times worse than those of the Jews, and in every corner of it spiritual idols. We ought in holy zeal to carry forth and destroy these enemies within. But we neglect what is most pressing, and the devil himself persuades us to abandon our own concerns, while he hinders us from reforming what is amiss in others."

Luther never lost himself in this quarrel. A living faith in Christ was that which especially filled his heart and life. "Within my heart," says he, "reigns alone, and must alone reign, faith in my Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the beginning, the

* Melch. Ad. Vita Spalat. p. 100.

† Foris sapere et domi desipere. (L. Epp. i. p. 8.)

middle, and the end of the thoughts that occupy me day and night."*

His hearers listened with admiration as he spoke from the professor's chair, or from the pulpit, of that faith in Christ. His instructions diffused light. The people marvelled that they had not earlier acknowledged truths which appeared so evident in his mouth. "The desire to justify ourselves is the spring of all our distress of heart," said he, "but he who receives Christ as a SAVIOUR has *peace*, and not only peace, but purity of heart. All sanctification of the heart is a fruit of faith. For faith in us is a divine work which changes us, and gives us a new birth, emanating from God himself. It kills *Adam* in us; and, through the Holy Spirit which it communicates, it gives us a new heart and makes us new men. It is not by empty speculations," he again exclaims, "but by this practical method that we obtain a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."†

It was at this time that Luther preached on the Ten Commandments a series of discourses, which have been preserved to us under the name of Declamations for the People. Doubtless they are not free from errors. Luther was only gradually gaining light: "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But still what truth in these discourses! what simplicity! what eloquence! how well can we conceive the effect that the new preacher would produce on his audience and on his age. We will

* Pref. ad Gal.

† Non per speculationem sed per hanc viam practicam.

cite only one passage at the opening of his discourses.

Luther ascended the pulpit of Wittemberg, and read these words: "Thou shalt have no other gods than Me." Then turning to the people, who thronged the sanctuary, he said: "All the sons of Adam are idolaters, and guilty transgressors of this first commandment."* Doubtless this strange assertion startled his audience. He must justify it. The speaker continued: "There are two kinds of idolatry; the one in outward action, the other within our hearts.

"The outward, by which man worships wood, stone, reptiles, or stars.

"The inward, by which man, dreading chastisement, or seeking his own pleasure, renders no outward worship to the creature, but yet in his heart loves it and trusts in it.

"But what kind of religion is this? you do not bend the knee before riches and honour, but you give them your heart, the noblest part of your nature. Alas! with your *bodies* you worship God, and with your *spirits* the creature.

"This idolatry pervades every man until he is freely recovered by the faith that is in Jesus Christ.

"And how is this recovery brought about?

"In this way: Faith in Christ strips you of all confidence in your own wisdom, and righteousness,

* Omnes filii Adæ sunt idolatræ.—Decem Præcepta Wittembergensi populo prædicata per R. P. D. Martinum Lutherum, Aug. anno 1516.—(They were preached in German. The quotation is from the Latin edition, i. p. 1.)

and strength; it teaches you that if Christ had not died for you, and saved you by his death, neither you nor any created power could have done so. Then you begin to despise all these things which you see to be unavailing.*

"Nothing remains, but Jesus—Jesus only; Jesus, abundantly sufficient for your soul. Hoping nothing from all created things, you have no dependence save on Christ, from whom you look for all, and whom you love above all.

"But Jesus is the one sole and true God. When you have him for your God, you have no other gods."†

It was thus that Luther pointed out how the soul is brought to God, its sovereign good by the Gospel;—agreeable to that declaration of Christ: "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The man who thus spoke to his generation was surely intent, not merely on overturning some abuses; his aim, above all, was to establish true religion. His work was not merely negative; it was primarily positive.

Luther then turned his discourse against the superstitions which filled Christendom; signs and mysterious omens; observances of particular days and months; familiar demons, phantoms, influences of the stars, incantations, metamorphoses, incubi and succubi; patronage of saints, &c. &c. &c. He

* Nisi ipse pro te mortuus esset teque servaret, nec tu, nec omnis creatura tibi posset prodesse. (Ibid.)

† At Jesus est verus, unus, solüs Deus, quem cum habes, non habes alienum Deum. (Ibid.)

attacked them all, one after the other, and with a strong arm cast down these false gods.

But it was especially before the academy, before that youth, enlightened and eager for instruction, that Luther spread out the treasures of the word of God. "He so explained the Scriptures," says his illustrious friend Melancthon, "that, in the judgment of all pious and enlightened men, it was as if a new light had arisen on the doctrine after a long and dark night. He pointed out the difference between the Law and the Gospel. He refuted that error, then predominant in the Church and schools, that men by their own works, obtain remission of sins, and are made righteous before God by an external discipline. He thus brought back the hearts of men to the Son of God.* Like John the Baptist, he pointed to the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world. He explained that sin is freely pardoned on account of God's Son, and that man receives this blessing through faith. He in no way interfered with the usual ceremonies. The established discipline had not in all his order a more faithful observer and defender. But he laboured more and more to make all understand the grand and essential doctrines of Conversion; of the Forgiveness of Sins; of Faith; and of the true consolations of the Cross. Pious souls were attracted and penetrated by the sweetness of this doctrine; the learned received it joyfully.† One might

* Revocavit igitur Lutherus hominum mentes ad filium Dei. (Melancthon, Vit. Luth.)

† Hujus doctrinæ dulcedine pii omnes valde capiebantur et eruditis gratum erat. (Ibid.)

have said that Christ and his Apostles and Prophets had come forth from darkness, or from some impure dungeon."*

The firmness with which Luther appealed to and rested on the Gospel, gave great authority to his teaching. But other circumstances added yet further to his power. With him, action corresponded with his words. It was known that these discourses were not merely the fruit of his lips.† They came from the heart, and were practised in his daily walk. And when, at a later period, the Reformation burst forth, many influential men who saw with grief the divisions of the Church, won beforehand by the holy life of the Reformer, and his remarkable genius, not only did not oppose him, but embraced the doctrine to which his life gave testimony.‡ The more men loved the christian virtues, the more did they incline toward the Reformer;—all the most upright divines were in favour of him.§ This is what those who knew him said of him, and especially the wisest man of his age, Melancthon, and Luther's celebrated opponent Erasmus. Envy and detraction have dared to talk of his dissolute life. Wittemberg was changed by this preaching of Faith. This city became the focus of a light which was soon to illuminate Germany, and spread over the whole Church.

* Quasi ex tenebris, carcere, squalore educi Christum, prophetas, apostolos. (Ibid.)

† Orationes non e labris nasci, sed in pectore. (Ibid.)

‡ Eique, propter auctoritatem quam sanctitate morum antea pepererat, adsenserunt. (Ibid.)

§ Puto et hodiè theologos omnes probos favere Luthero. (Erasm. Epp. i. 652.)

Luther, whose heart was tender and affectionate, desired to see those whom he loved in possession of the light which had guided him in the paths of peace. He availed himself of all the opportunities he possessed as professor, teacher, and monk, as well as of his extensive correspondence, to communicate his treasure to others. One of his old associates of the convent of Erfurth, the monk George Spenlein, was then in the convent of Memmingen, having, perhaps, spent a short time at Wittemberg. Spenlein had commissioned Luther to sell some effects that he had left in his hands, a cloak of Brussels stuff, a work by the doctor Isenac, and a monk's hood. Luther carefully executed this commission. "He got," says he, "a florin for the cloak, half a florin for the book, and a florin for the hood," and had forwarded the amount to the Father Vicar, to whom Spenlein was indebted the three florins. But Luther passed quickly from this account of a monk's effects to a more important subject.

"I should like," says he to brother George, "to know how it is with your soul? Is it weary of its own righteousness? In a word does it breathe freely? and put its trust in the righteousness of Christ? In these days pride has drawn many aside, and especially those who labour with all their strength to be righteous. Not understanding the righteousness of God, which is given to us freely in Jesus Christ, they would stand before him on their own merits. But that can never be. When you and I were living together, you were under this delusion, and so was I. I contend against it unceasingly, and I have not yet entirely overcome it."

"Oh, my dear brother, learn to know Christ, and him crucified. Learn to sing a new song—to despair of your own work, and to cry unto him, Lord Jesus, thou art my righteousness, and I am thy sin. Thou hast taken on thee what was mine, and given to me what is thine;* what thou wast not, thou becamest, that I might become what I was not. Beware, my dear George, of aspiring after such a purity as that thou mayest not have to acknowledge thyself a sinner; for Christ dwells only with sinners. He came down from heaven, where he abode with the just, to dwell also with sinners. Meditate often on this love of Christ, and you will taste its unspeakable comfort. If our labours and afflictions could give peace to the conscience, why did Christ die upon the cross? You will find peace in him alone; despairing of yourself and of your works, and beholding with what love he spreads his arms to you; taking all your sins on himself, and bestowing on you all his righteousness."

Thus, the doctrine of power, which had already been the saving of the world in the days of the Apostles, and which was a second time to save it in the days of the Reformers, was set forth by Luther fearlessly and clearly. Reaching across many centuries of ignorance and superstition, he, in this, gave his hand to St. Paul.

Spenlein was not the only one whom he sought to instruct in this fundamental doctrine. The little of the truth he found on this subject in the writings of Erasmus distressed him. It was desirable to

* Tu Domine Jesu es justitia mea; ego autem sum peccatum tuum; tu assumpsisti meum, et dedisti mihi tuum. (L. Ep. i. p. 17.)

enlighten on this matter a man of such great authority and such admirable genius.' But how to do this. His friend at the court, the chaplain of the Elector, was much respected by Erasmus; to him Luther addressed himself thus: "What displeases me in Erasmus, that man of rare erudition, is, that where the Apostle speaks of the righteousness of works and of the law, he understands the fulfilment of the *ceremonial* law. The righteousness of the law consists not alone in ceremonies, but in all the works of the Ten Commandments. When these works are done without faith in Christ, they may, it is true, make a Fabricius, a Regulus, or a man of perfect integrity in man's sight, but they, in that case, are as little entitled to the name of righteousness, as the fruit of the medlar-tree is entitled to be called a fig. For we do not become righteous, as Aristotle asserts, by doing works of righteousness, but when we are righteous we do righteous works.* It is necessary that the agent be changed, and then the works by consequence. Abel was first acceptable to God, and then his sacrifice was accepted." Luther continues: "I entreat you, fulfil the duty of a friend and of a Christian in pressing these things on Erasmus." This letter is dated "in great haste, from the corner of our convent, the 19th of October, 1516." It exhibits in its true light the relation between Luther and Erasmus. It shews the sincere interest he took in what he thought really for the good of that illustrious writer. Doubtless at a later period Erasmus's opposition to the truth

* Non enim just agendo justi efficimur: sed justi fiendo et essendo operamur justa. (L. Ep. i. p. 22.)

obliged him to oppose him openly; but he did so only after having sought to set his adversary right.

The world, then, heard at length ideas at once clear and deep on the nature of that which is good. The principle was at last proclaimed, that what constitutes the real goodness of an action is not its outward character, but the spirit in which it is performed. This was aiming a death-blow at all the superstitious observances, which had for centuries oppressed the Church, and prevented the christian virtues from growing and prospering.

"I read Erasmus," writes Luther elsewhere, "but he every day loses weight with me. I love to see him rebuke, with so much learning and firmness, the grovelling ignorance of the priests and monks; but I fear he does no great service to the doctrine of Christ. What is of man, is nearer to his heart than what is of God.* We live in critical times. To make a good and judicious Christian, it is not enough to understand Greek and Hebrew. St. Jerome, who knew five languages, is inferior to St. Augustine who understood but one; though Erasmus thinks the contrary. I carefully conceal my opinion of Erasmus, lest I should give an advantage to his adversaries. It may be, that the Lord will give him understanding in his good time."†

The inability of man,—the almighty power of God,—these were the two truths that Luther sought to re-establish. That is but a melancholy religion,

*℘ Humana prævalunt in eo plusquam divina.

† Dabit ei Dominus intellectum suo forte tempore. (L. Epp. i. p. 52.)

and a poor philosophy, which directs man to his own natural strength. Past ages have made trial of that strength; and whilst, in earthly things, man has attained admirable excellence, he has never been able to dissipate the darkness which hides God from his soul, or to change a single inclination to evil. The highest attainment in wisdom of the most aspiring minds, or of the souls most eager after perfection, has been to despair of themselves.* It is, therefore, a generous, consoling, and supremely true doctrine, which discovers to us our impotence, that it may declare a power—of God—by which we can do all things; and that is a noble Reformation which vindicates on earth the glory of heaven, and pleads before man the rights of the mighty God.

But no one knew better than Luther the intimate connection that unites the free salvation which cometh of God, with the free works of man. No one shewed better than he, that it is only in receiving *all* from Christ, that man gives freely to his brethren. He ever presented, in the same picture, these two procedures,—that of God, and that of man. Thus, after having declared to Spenlein the righteousness which saves us, he added: "If thou firmly believest these things, as thou oughtest, (for cursed is he whosoever doth not believe them,) receive thine erring and ignorant brethren as Jesus Christ hath received thee. Bear with them patiently; make their sins your own; and if you have any good thing to communicate to them, do it.

* τί οὖν; δυνατόν ἀναμαρτητον εἶναι ἤδη;—What! is it possible to help sinning? asks Epictetus, iv. 12, 19, Αμήχανον. Impossible! he answers.

Receive you one another, said the Apostle, as Christ also hath received us, to the glory of God. It is a wretched righteousness which will not bear with others, because it deems them evil, and seeks the solitude of the desert, instead of doing good to such, by long-suffering, by prayer, and example. If thou art the lily and the rose of Christ, know that thy dwelling-place is among thorns. Only take heed, lest by impatience, rash judgments, and pride, thou thyself become a thorn. Christ reigns in the midst of his enemies. If he had desired to live only among the good, and die only for such as loved him, would he have died at all? and among whom would he have lived?"

It is affecting to see how Luther himself put in practice these precepts of charity. An Augustine of Erfurth, George Leiffer, was exposed to many trials. Luther heard of it, and a week after he wrote this letter, he went to him with expressions of compassion: "I hear," said he, "that you are driven about by many tempests, and that your soul is impelled hither and thither by the waves. The cross of Christ is divided over the earth, and each one has his share. Do not, you, refuse your portion; rather receive it as a holy relic;—not, indeed, into a gold or silver vase, but, what is much preferable, into a heart of gold—a heart imbued with meekness. If the word of the cross was so sanctified by the blood and body of Christ, that we deem it the most venerable of relics, how much more should we count, as holy relics, the wrongs, persecutions, sufferings and hatred of men, since they were not only touched

by Christ's flesh, but embraced, kissed, and made blessed by his boundless love."*

The teaching of Luther bore fruit. Many of his disciples felt themselves impelled to a public profession of the truths which their master's lessons had revealed to them. Among his hearers was a young scholar, Bernard of Feldkirchen, professor of Aristotelian physics in the university, and, five years later, the first of the ecclesiastics who entered into the marriage state.

Luther desired Feldkirchen to maintain, under his presidence, *theses*, in which his principles were set forth. The doctrines professed by Luther acquired by this means additional publicity. The disputation took place in 1516.

This was Luther's first attack on the reign of the sophists and on the Papacy, as he says himself. Feeble as it was, it cost him many misgivings. "I consent to the printing of these propositions," said he many years after, when publishing them in his works, "chiefly that the greatness of my cause, and the success with which God has crowned it, may not lift me up; for they manifest abundantly my shame, that is to say the infirmity and ignorance, the fear and trembling, with which I began this contest. I was alone; I had thrown myself rashly into the affair. Not being able to draw back, I gave up to the Pope many important points;—I even worshipped his authority."†

* . . . . Sanctissimæ reliquiæ . . . deificæ voluntatis suæ, charitate amplexæ, osculatæ. (L. Epp. i. 18.)

† Sed etiam ultro adorabam. (L. Opp. lat. i. p. 50.)

The following were some of these propositions :*—

"The old man is the vanity of vanities; he is the universal vanity, and he makes other creatures vain, whatever goodness may be in them.

"The old man is called 'the flesh,' not merely because he is led by the desires of the flesh, but also, because though he should even be chaste, virtuous, and just, he is not born again of God, by the Spirit.

"A man who is a stranger to the grace of God cannot keep the commandments of God, nor prepare himself wholly, or in part, to receive grace, but remains necessarily under sin.

"The will of man, without divine grace, is not free, but enslaved and willing to be so.

"Jesus Christ, our strength, our righteousness, he who searches the hearts and reins, is the only discerner and judge of our deserts.

"Since all things are possible through Christ to him that believeth, it is superstitious to seek for other help, either in man's will or in the saints."†

This disputation made a great noise, and it has been considered as the commencement of the Reformation.

The moment drew nigh when that Reformation was to burst forth. God hastened the preparation of the instrument he designed to use. The Elector, having built a new church at Wittemberg, and given it the name of All Saints, despatched Stau-

* L. W. (L.) xviii. p. 142, and in the Latin works. Tom. i. p. 51.

† Cum credenti omnia sint, auctore Christo, possibilia, superstitiosum est, humano arbitrio, aliis sanctis, alia deputari auxilia. (Ibid.)

pitz to the Low Countries to collect relics to enrich the new temple. The Vicar-general commissioned Luther to take his place in his absence, and, in particular, to make a visitation to forty monasteries of Misnia and Thuringia.

Luther went first to Grimma, and thence to Dresden. Everywhere he endeavoured to establish the truths he had discovered, and to enlighten the members of his order. "Do not join yourselves to Aristotle," said he to the monks, "or to the other teachers of a misleading philosophy, but apply yourselves to the reading of the word of God. Seek not your salvation in your own strength and good works, but in the merits of Christ and in the grace of God."*

An Augustine monk of Dresden had eloped from his convent, and was residing at Mentz, where the prior of the Augustines had received him. Luther wrote to the prior,† desiring him to send back this stray sheep; and he added these words of truth and charity: "I know—I know it cannot be but that offences must come. It is no wonder when man falls, but it is a miracle when he rises and continues standing. Peter fell that he might know that he was man. Even at this day we see cedars of Lebanon falling. The angels, even, (difficult as it is to conceive it,) fell in heaven, and Adam in Paradise. Why, then, should we wonder when a reed is shaken by the whirlwind, or a flickering taper is extinguished."

From Dresden, Luther repaired to Erfurth, and re-

* Hilscher, Luthers Anwesenheit in Alt-Dresden, 1728.

† 1 May, 1516. Epp. i. p. 20.

appeared, to exercise the functions of Vicar-general in that same convent, where, eleven years before he had wound up the clock, opened the gates, and swept the floor of the church. He placed in the post of prior of the convent his friend the bachelor, John Lange, a man of learning and piety, but austere in his disposition. Therefore it was he exhorted him to affability and patience. "Put on," said he, writing to him shortly after, "put on a spirit of meekness toward the prior of Nuremberg. It is proper that you should do so, since the prior has assumed a harsh and bitter tone. Bitterness is not expelled by bitterness,—that is to say, the devil is not cast out by the devil; but the sweet overcomes and expels the bitter,—in other words, the finger of God casts out devils."* Perhaps we may regret that Luther himself, on some occasions, forgot to follow these excellent directions.

At Neustadt, on the Orla, there was nothing but disunion. Disturbances and dissensions reigned in the convent. The whole body of the monks were in open war with their prior. They beset Luther with their complaints. The prior, Michael Dressel—or Tornator, as Luther calls him, translating his name into Latin,—enumerated to the Doctor all his grievances. "Oh, for peace!" said the prior. "You seek peace," said Luther, "but it is only the peace of the world, and not the peace that is of Christ. Do you not know that our God has set His peace in the midst of opposition? He whom no-

* L. Epp. i. p. 36. Non enim asper asperum, id est non diabolus diabolum, sed suavis asperum, id est digitum Dei ejicit dæmonia.

body disturbs has not peace, but he who, harassed by all men, and by the things of this life, bears all tranquilly and joyfully; he it is that has the true peace. You cry, with Israel, *peace, peace,* when there is no peace. Say rather with Christ, *the cross, the cross,* and there will be no cross: for the cross ceases to be a cross when we can say with love: 'O blessed cross! there is no wood like thine!'"* On his return to Wittemberg, Luther, desiring to put a stop to these dissensions, allowed the monks to elect another prior.

Luther returned to Wittemberg after six weeks absence. What he had witnessed saddened him; but his journey gave him a better knowledge of the Church and of the world, and more confidence in his intercourse with mankind, besides offering many opportunities of pressing the fundamental truth that "Holy Scripture alone shews us the way to heaven," and at the same time exhorting the brethren to live holily and at peace one with another.† Doubtless a plenteous seed was sown in the different Augustine convents during that journey of the Reformer. The monastic orders, which had long been the support of Rome, did more, perhaps, for the Reformation than against it. This was especially true of the Augustines. Almost all the men of liberal and enlightened piety who were living in the cloisters, turned toward the Gospel. A new and generous blood seemed to circulate through these orders, which were as the arteries of the Catholic body in Germany. In

* Tam cito enim crux cessat esse crux quam cito lætus dixeris: Crux benedicta! inter ligna nullum tale. (Epp. i. 27.)

† Heiliglich, friedlich und züchtig. (Math. p. 10.)

public, little was as yet heard of the new ideas of the Augustine of Wittemberg; while they were already the chief subject of conversation in chapters and monasteries. More than one cloister was, in this way, the nursery of the Reformers. When the great struggle came, pious and brave men came forth from their retirement and exchanged the solitude of monkish life for the active service of ministers of God's word. Even as early as this visit of inspection in 1516, Luther aroused by his words many a drowsy spirit. Hence that year has been named "the Morning Star of the Reformation."

Luther now resumed his usual occupation. He was, at this period, overwhelmed with labour. Besides his duties as professor, preacher, and confessor, he was burthened with many temporal concerns of his order and convent. "I require almost continually," said he, "two secretaries; for I do scarce anything else all day long than write letters. I am preacher to the convent, reader of prayers at table, pastor and parish minister, director of studies, vicar of the priory (that is to say, prior ten times over), inspector of the fish-ponds of Litzkau, counsel to the inns of Herzberg at Torgau, lecturer on St. Paul, and commentator on the Psalms. Seldom have I time to say my prayers, or to sing a hymn; not to mention my struggle with flesh and blood, the devil and the world. See what an idle man I am!"*

About this time the plague shewed itself at Wittemberg. A great number of the students and doctors quitted the town. Luther remained. "I do not very well know," wrote he to his friend at

* Epp. i. p. 41, to Lange, 26 Oct. 1516.

Erfurth, "whether the plague will suffer me to finish the Epistle to the Galatians. Quick and sudden in its attacks, it makes great havoc, especially among the young. You advise me to flee,—but whither shall I flee? I hope the world will not go to pieces if brother Martin should fall.* If the plague spreads, I will send the brethren away in all directions, but for my part I am placed here; obedience does not allow me to leave the spot until He who called me hither shall call me away. Not that I am above the fear of death, (for I am not the Apostle Paul, but only his commentator), but I trust the Lord will deliver me from the fear of it." Such was the firm resolution of the Doctor of Wittemberg. He whom the plague could not force to retire a single step, would he draw back from fear of Rome? would he recede in the prospect of the scaffold?

The same courage that Luther evinced in presence of the most formidable evils, he manifested before the great ones of the world. The Elector was well satisfied with the Vicar-general. He had reaped a rich harvest of relics in the Low Countries. Luther gave an account of it to Spalatin. This affair of the relics is singular enough, occurring as it did at the moment when the Reformation was about to open. Assuredly the Reformers did not see clearly whither they were tending. The Elector deemed that nothing less than a bishopric was a reward commensurate with the services of the Vicar-general. Luther, to whom Spalatin

* Quo fugiam? spero quod non corruet orbis ruente fratre Martino. (Epp. i. p. 42, 26 Oct. 1516.)

wrote on the subject, highly disapproved the suggestion. "There are many things," answered he, "that are pleasing to your prince, which yet displease God. I do not deny that he is skilled in the concerns of the world, but in what relates to God and the salvation of souls, I consider him altogether blind, as well as his adviser Pfeffinger. I do not say that behind his back, like a calumniator; I do not conceal my opinion from them; for I am at all times ready myself to tell them both so to their faces. Why will you," continued he, "seek to surround that man (Staupitz) with all the heavings and tempests of episcopal cares?"*

The Elector did not take amiss the frankness of Luther. "The Prince," wrote Spalatin, "often speaks of you in honourable terms." Frederic sent the monk some stuff for a gown. It was of very fine cloth. "It would be too fine," said Luther, "if it were not a prince's gift. I am not worthy that any man should think of me, much less a prince, and so noble a prince. Those are most useful to me who think worst of me.† Present my thanks to our Prince for his favour, but know that I desire neither the praise of thyself nor of others; all the praise of man is vain, the praise that cometh of God being alone true."

The worthy chaplain would not confine himself to his functions at the court. He wished to make himself useful to the people, but, like many others

* Multa placent principi tuo, quæ Deo displicent (L. Epp. i. p. 25.)

† Si mihi maxime prosunt que mei pessime meminerint. (L. Epp. i. p. 45.)

in all ages, he wished to do it without offence, without irritating any one, and so as to conciliate general favour. "Point out to me," said he, in a letter to Luther, "some writing to translate, but one that shall give general satisfaction, and at the same time be useful." "Agreeable and useful!" replied Luther, "that is beyond my skill. The better things are, the less they please. What is more salutary than Christ? and yet he is to most a savour of death. You will say that what you intend is to be useful to those who love Christ;—then cause them to hear his voice; you will thus be agreeable and useful,—never doubt it,—but to a small number, for the sheep are but rare in this dreary region of wolves."*

Luther, however, recommended to his friend the sermons of Tauler the Dominican. "I never saw," said he, "either in Latin or in our language, a theology more sound or more conformable to the Gospel. Taste them and see how gracious the Lord is, but not till you have first tasted and experienced how bitter is every thing in ourselves."†

It was in the course of the year 1517 that Luther became connected with Duke George of Saxony. The house of Saxony had at that time two chiefs. Two princes, Ernest and Albert, carried off in their childhood from the castle of Altenburg, by Kunz of Kaufungen, had by the treaty of Leipsic been acknowledged as the founders of the two houses which still bear their names. The Elector Frederic, son of Ernest, was at the period we are

* Quò sunt aliqua salubriora, eo minus placent. (L. Epp. i. p. 46.)

† Quam amarum est, quicquid nos sumus. (Ibid.)

recording, the head of the Ernestine branch, as his cousin Duke George was head of the Albertine branch. Dresden and Leipsic were situated in the states of this duke, and he himself resided in the former of these cities. His mother, Sidonia, was daughter of the King of Bohemia, George Podiebrad. The long struggle which Bohemia had maintained with Rome, since the time of John Huss, had had some influence on the Prince of Saxony. He had often manifested a desire of a Reformation. "He sucked it with his mother's milk," said they; "he is, by his nature, an enemy to the clergy."* He annoyed, in many ways, the bishops, abbots, canons, and monks; and his cousin, the Elector Frederic, often had to interpose in their behalf. It must have seemed that Duke George would be the warmest patron of a Reformation. The devout Frederic, on the contrary, who had in early life assumed, in the holy sepulchre, the spurs of Godfrey, and armed himself with the long and heavy sword of the conqueror of Jerusalem, making oath to fight for the Church, like that valiant knight, seemed marked out to be the most ardent champion of Rome. But in what pertains to the Gospel, all the calculations of human wisdom are often deceived. The very reverse ensued. The Duke would have taken pleasure in bringing down the Church and the clergy, in humbling the bishops, whose princely retinue much exceeded his own; but to receive into his heart the doctrine of the Gospel, which was to humble him,—to confess himself a guilty sinner, incapable of being saved except by grace,—was quite

* L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 1849.

another thing. He would have willingly reformed others, but he had no idea of reforming himself. He would perhaps have put his hand to the work to oblige the Bishop of Mentz to limit himself to one bishopric, and to have only fourteen horses in his stables, as he said more than once;* but when he saw one altogether unlike himself appear as the Reformer,—when he beheld a plain monk undertake this work, and the Reformation gaining ground among the people,—the proud grandson of the Hussite King became the most violent adversary of the reform to which he had shown himself favourable.

In the month of July, 1517, Duke George requested Staupitz to send him a learned and eloquent preacher. Staupitz sent Luther, recommending him as a man of great learning and irreproachable conduct. The prince invited him to preach at Dresden in the chapel of the castle on St. James the Elder's day.

The day came. The Duke and his court repaired to the chapel to hear the preacher from Wittemberg. Luther seized with joy the opportunity of giving his testimony to the truth before such an assembly. He chose as his text the gospel of the day:—"Then the mother of Zebedee's children came to him with her sons," &c. (Matt. xx. 20.) He preached on the desires and unreasonable prayers of men, and then proceeded to speak with energy on the assurance of salvation. He rested it on this foundation;—that they who hear the word of God and believe it, are the true disciples of Christ, elect unto eternal life. Then he spoke of free election;

* L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 1849.

he shewed that this doctrine, viewed in connection with Christ's work, has power to dispel the terrors of conscience, so that men, instead of fleeing far from the Holy God, in the consciousness of their unworthiness, are brought by grace to seek refuge in Him. In conclusion, he related a story of three virgins, from which he deduced edifying instructions.

The word of truth made a profound impression on the hearers. Two of them, especially, seemed to pay particular attention to the sermon of the monk of Wittemberg. The first was a lady of respectable appearance, seated on the benches of the court, and on whose features might be traced a deep emotion. This was Madame de la Sale, lady of the bed-chamber to the Duchess. The other was Jerome Emser, licentiate of canon law, and secretary and counsellor to the Duke. Emser was gifted with talents and extensive acquirements. A courtier, a skilful politician, he would have wished at once to satisfy two opposite parties,—to pass at Rome as a defender of the Papacy, and at the same time shine among the learned men of Germany. But beneath this dexterous policy lay hid much violence of character. It was the chapel of the castle of Dresden that was the scene of the first meeting of Luther and Emser, who were destined afterwards to break more than one lance together.

The dinner hour sounded in the castle, and soon the ducal family and the different persons of the court were assembled round the table. The conversation naturally turned on the morning preacher. "How did you like the sermon?" said the Duke to Madame de la Sale. "If I could but hear one

other such sermon," answered she, "I would die in peace." "And I," replied Duke George angrily, "would give something not to have heard it; for such sermons are good for nothing, and serve only to encourage men in sin."

The master having thus made known his opinion, the courtiers gave vent to their dissatisfaction. Each was ready with his remark. Some asserted that in Luther's story of the three virgins, he had in his eye three ladies of the court;—hereupon much talk and whispering ensued. The three ladies were rallied on the circumstance of the monk of Wittemberg, having, as they said, publicly pointed them out.* "He is an ignorant fellow," said some. "A proud monk!" said others. Each one criticised the sermon in his own manner, and made the preacher say what he pleased. The truth had fallen in the midst of a court little prepared to receive it. Every one mangled it at his will. But whilst the word of God was thus to some an occasion of falling, it was to the lady of the bed-chamber a corner-stone of edification. One month afterwards, she fell sick, embraced with confidence the grace of the Saviour, and died with joy.†

As to the Duke, it was not perhaps in vain that he heard this testimony to the truth. Whatever had been his opposition to the Reformation during his life, he is known to have declared on his death-bed that he had no other hope than in the merits of Christ.

* Has tres postea in aulâ principis, a me notatas garrierunt. (L. Epp. i. p. 85.)

† Keith. Leb. Luth. p. 32.

It was a matter of course that Emser should do the honours to Luther in the name of his master. He invited him to supper. Luther declined. But Emser pressed him till he assented. Luther expected to meet only a few friends, but he soon saw it was a trap laid for him.* A master of arts of Leipsic and several Dominicans were with the Prince's secretary. The master of arts, full of confidence in himself, and of hatred against Luther, accosted him with a friendly and gentle air, but soon lost his temper, and talked loudly.† The debate was opened. The discussion turned, says Luther, on the solemn trifling of Aristotle and St. Thomas.‡ In conclusion, Luther challenged the master of arts to define, with all the learning of the Thomists, in what obedience to God's commandments consisted. The master of arts, though puzzled, put a good face upon it. "Pay me my fees first," said he, holding out his hand, "*Da pastum,*" as though he were called on to give a formal lecture, treating the guests as his scholars. "At this ridiculous reply," adds the Reformer, "we all laughed outright, and hereupon we separated."

During this conversation, a Dominican had listened at the door. He wanted to enter that he might spit in Luther's face.§ He, however, restrained himself; but publicly boasted of it afterwards. Emser, delighted to see his guests contending with each other, while he himself appeared to maintain a

* Inter medias me insidias conjectum. (L. Epp. i. 85.)

† In me acriter et clamosè invectus est. (Ibid.)

‡ Super Aristotelis et Thomæ nugis. (Ibid.)

§ Ne prodiret et in faciem mei spueret. (Ibid.)

guarded medium, took pains to excuse himself to Luther on the incident of the evening.* The latter returned to Wittemberg.

He again applied himself laboriously to work. He was preparing six or seven young divines, who were about to undergo examination for license to teach. What most pleased him was, that their promotion would contribute to the downfal of Aristotle. "I would lose no time," said he, "in adding to the number of his opponents."† And with this object, he, about that time, published some theses which deserve our attention.

The Freedom of the Will was his high subject. He had already slightly touched on it in the theses of Feldkirchen; he now went more fully into the question. Ever since the promulgation of Christianity, a controversy has been carried on, with more or less keenness, between the two doctrines of the liberty and the bondage of the human will. Certain scholastic writers, as Pelagius, and others, had taught that man possessed, from his own nature, a freedom of will, or the power of loving God and doing righteousness. Luther denied this doctrine; not in order to deprive man of liberty, but that he might lead him to obtain it. The point of dispute, then, is not, as has been commonly said, between liberty and slavery; it is between a liberty proceeding from man's nature, and a liberty that cometh of God. The one party, who call themselves the advocates of liberty, say to man: "Thou hast the power to do right, thou hast no need of

* Enixè sese excusavit.

† Cujus vellum hostes cito quamplurimos fieri. (Epp. i. 59.)

more liberty!" the others, who have been styled the partizans of slavery, say to him the very reverse: "True liberty is what thou needest, and it is what God offers to thee in the Gospel." On the one side, they talk of liberty so as to perpetuate servitude; on the other, they proclaim to us our bondage that we may obtain liberty. Such has been the contest in St. Paul's time; in the days of St. Augustine; and, again, in those of Luther. The one party, congratulating man on his freedom, would, in effect, reconcile him to slavery; the other, showing how his fetters may be struck off, are the true advocates of liberty.

But we should be deceiving ourselves, if we are to sum up, in this question, the whole of the Reformation. It is one, and only one, of many doctrines that the professor of Wittemberg contended for. It would, especially, be a strange error to assert, that the Reformation was a fatalism,—an opposition to the notion of human liberty. It was a noble emancipation of the mind of man. Bursting the many cords with which the hierarchy had tied down the thoughts of men,—restoring the ideas of liberty, of right of free investigation,—it liberated its own age, ourselves, and the remotest posterity. And let none say: "True, the Reformation did liberate man from all human despotism; but, at the same time, reduced him to slavery in other things, by proclaiming the sovereignty of grace." Doubtless, its aim was to bring the human will into harmony with the divine will, to subject the former absolutely to the latter, and to blend them together. But where is the philosopher who does not know, that

perfect conformity to the will of God is the sole, sovereign, and complete liberty; and that man will never he truly free, until perfect righteousness and unchanging truth reign unrivalled in his heart and mind?

The following are a few of the ninety-nine propositions which Luther put forth in the Church, against the Pelagian rationalism of the scholastic theology:—

"It is true that man, who is become 'a bad tree,' can but will and do what is evil.

"It is false that the will, left to itself, can do good as well as evil; for it is not free, but led captive.

"It is not in the power of man's will to purpose or not purpose all that is suggested to him.

"Man, by nature, cannot wish that God should be God. He would prefer that himself should be God, and that God should not be God.

"The excellent, infallible, and sole preparation for grace, is the election and the everlasting predestination of God.*

"It is false to say, that man, if he does all in his power, dissipates the obstacles to divine grace.

"In one word, nature possesses neither a pure reason nor a good will.†

"On man's part, there is nothing that goes before grace,—nothing but impotency and rebellion.

* Optima et infallibilis ad gratiam preparatio et unica dispositio est æterna Dei electio et prædestinatio. (L. Opp. lat. i. 56.)

† Breviter nec rectum dictamen habet natura nec bonam voluntatem. (Ib.)

"There is no moral virtue without pride or sadness,—that is to say, without sin.

"From first to last, we are not the masters of our actions, but their slaves.

"We do not become righteous by doing that which is righteous; but having become righteous, we do that which is righteous.

"He who says a theologian, unacquainted with logic, is an heretic and empiric, makes an empirical and heretical assertion.

"There is no form of reasoning or syllogism suited to the things of God.*

"If the syllogistic method were applicable to divine things, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity would be *known* and not *believed*.

"In a word, Aristotle is to theology as darkness to light.

"Man is more opposed to the *grace* of God than to the law itself.

"He who is destitute of the grace of God sins incessantly, though he should neither kill, nor steal, nor commit adultery.

"He sins, because he does not fulfil the law *spiritually*.

"It is the righteousness of hypocrites not to kill, and not to commit adultery in outward act.

"The law of God and the will of man are two opposites, which, without the grace of God, cannot be made to meet.†

* Nulla forma syllogistica tenet in terminis divinis. (L. Opp. lat. i. 56.)

† Lex et voluntas sunt adversarii duo sine gratia Dei implacabiles. (Ib. p. 57.)

"What the law prescribes the will never seeks, unless, from fear or interest, it affects to seek it.

"The law is a task-master of our will, which is not brought into obedience, save only by the young child born unto us.* (Isa. ix. 6.)

"The law makes sin to abound, for it irritates and repells the will.

"But the grace of God makes righteousness to abound 'by Jesus Christ;' who leads us to love the law.

"All the works of the law seem fair without, but are sin within.

"The will, when it turns towards the law, without the grace of God, does so only for its own self-pleasing.

"They are still under the curse who do the works of the law.

"Blessed are all they who do works of the grace of God.

"The law which is good, and in which we have life, is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

"Grace is not given, that works may be done oftener or easier; but because, without grace, no work of love can be done.

"To love God is to abhor ourselves, and to have nothing out of God."†

Thus, Luther attributes to God all good that man can do. It is not enough to repair and patch

* Lex est exactor voluntatis, qui non superatur nisi per Parvulum qui natus est nobis. (L. Opp. lat. i. 57.)

† L. Opp. Lips. xvii. p. 143; and Opp. lat. i.

up, if we may so speak, man's will; an entirely new will must be given him. God only could have said this; because God only could accomplish it. This is one of the greatest and most important truths that the human mind can receive.

But Luther, while proclaiming the impotence of man, did not fall into a contrary extreme to that he opposed. He says, in his 8th thesis: "It does not follow, from this statement, that the will is in its nature bad: that is, that its nature is that of evil itself, as the Manicheans have asserted."* The nature of man was at first essentially good: it has turned aside from good,—that is, from God,—and inclined to evil. Still its holy and glorious origin remains, and it may, by the power of God, be restored and renewed. The office of Christianity is thus to restore it. It is true, the Gospel represents man in a condition of humiliation and impotence, but between two states of glory and of grandeur,—a past glory, from which he has been hurled, and a future glory, to which he is called. That is the real truth: man knows it, and on the slightest consideration, he perceives that all that is said of his present purity, power, and glory, is nothing but a fiction designed to lull and soothe his pride.

Luther, in his theses, protested not only against the pretended goodness of man's will, but also against the asserted illumination of his understanding in regard to divine things. The schoolmen had exalted human reason as well as man's will. This theology, as it had been represented by some

* Nec igitur sequitur quod sit naturaliter mala, id est natura mali, secundum Manichæos. (Ibid.)

of its teachers, was at the bottom a kind of rationalism. The propositions that we have quoted, shew this. We might suppose them directed against the rationalism of our day. In the theses which were the signal of the Reformation, Luther censured the Church and the popular superstitions which had overloaded the Gospel with indulgences, purgatory and so many other abuses. In the theses we have now quoted, he attacked the schools and the rationalism which had retrenched from the Gospel the doctrine of God's sovereign grace. The Reformation turned against rationalism before it attacked superstition. It proclaimed the rights of God before it lopped off the excrescences of man. It was positive—before it was negative. This has not been sufficiently adverted to, and yet, if we do not keep it in mind, it is impossible to appreciate this religious revolution and its true nature.

However this may be, the truths that Luther had just expressed with so much energy, were quite new to his hearers. To maintain these theses at Wittemberg would have been an easy thing. His influence prevailed there. It might have been said that he was choosing a field in which he knew no antagonist could oppose him. By offering battle in another university, he was giving them a wider publicity; and it was through publicity that the Reformation was to be effected. He chose Erfurth, whose divines had shewn themselves so offended with him.

He therefore sent these theses to John Lange, prior of Erfurth, and wrote to him thus: "My anxiety to know your mind on these paradoxes is great, perhaps extreme. I strongly suspect that

your theologians will consider as paradox, and even as *cacodox*, that which I must always consider very orthodox.* Tell me, therefore, your opinion, as soon as you can. Pray inform the faculty of theology, and all others, that I am ready to come among you, and publicly maintain these propositions, either in the University or in the monastery." It does not appear that Luther's challenge was accepted. The monks of Erfurth contented themselves with letting him know that these theses had greatly displeased them.

But he determined to send them into another part of Germany. He turned his eyes, for that purpose, on one who played a remarkable part in the history of the Reformation, and whose character it is necessary we should understand.

John Meyer, a distinguished professor, was then teaching at the university of Ingolstadt, in Bavaria. He was a native of Eck, a village of Suabia, and was commonly called Doctor Eck. He was a friend of Luther, who highly esteemed his talents and information. He was full of intelligence, well read, and gifted with an extraordinary memory. To his learning he united eloquence. His action and voice expressed the liveliness of his genius. Eck was, as to talent, in southern Germany, what Luther was in the north. They were the two most distinguished theologians of that period, though differing widely in their tendency, as the sequel shewed. Ingolstadt almost rivalled Wittemberg. The reputation of the two Doctors drew from all sides to their respective universities a crowd of

* Imo cacodoxa videri. (L. Epp. i. 60.)

students eager to listen to their lectures. Their personal qualities, not less than their learning, endeared them to their scholars. The character of Eck has been censured. An incident of his life will shew, that, at this period at least, his heart was not closed against generous impulses.

Among the students, whom his reputation had attracted to Ingolstadt, was a young man named Urban Regius, born on the banks of one of the Swiss lakes. He had studied first at the university of Friburg in Brisgau. Arriving at Ingolstadt, whither the reputation of Eck had attracted him, Urban there attended courses of philosophy, and won the doctor's favour. Obliged to provide for his own necessities, he found himself compelled to take charge of the education of some young nobles. He was not only to overlook their conduct and studies, but himself to buy for them the books and clothes they needed. These youths were accustomed to dress well and live expensively. Regius, uneasy at this, requested the parents to remove their sons. "Take courage," answered they. His debts increased, his creditors became clamorous, he knew not what would become of him. The Emperor was then collecting an army against the Turks. Some recruiting parties arrived at Ingolstadt. In his desperation Urban enlisted. He appeared in the ranks in military garb, at a review preparatory to marching. Just then, Doctor Eck arrived in the square with some of his colleagues. To his great surprise, he recognised his student in the midst of the recruits. "Urban Regius!" said he, approaching him, and fixing on him a scrutinizing eye. "I

am here?" answered the conscript. "What, I pray you, is the cause of this change?" The young man told his story. "I will settle the affair," answered Eck. He then proceeded to take away his halberd, and bought his discharge from the recruiting officers. The parents, threatened by the Doctor with the displeasure of their prince, sent the necessary funds for their children's expenditure. Urban Regius was preserved, to become at a later period one of the supporters of the Reformation.

It was Doctor Eck that Luther pitched on to make known in the southern states, his theses on Pelagianism and the Rationalism of the Schools. He did not, however, send them direct to the Professor of Ingolstadt, but addressed them to their common friend, the worthy Christopher Scheurl, town-clerk of the city of Nuremberg, requesting him to forward them to Eck, at Ingolstadt, which was not far from Nuremberg. "I send you," said he, "my propositions, (merely paradoxical, or even *kakistodoxical* as they seem to many); communicate them to our dear Eck, that learned and sagacious man, that I may know what he thinks of them."* It was thus Luther then spoke of Doctor Eck; such was the friendship which united them. Luther was not the first to break off this good understanding.

But the combat was not to be fought on that field. These *theses* turned, it may be thought, on doctrines of higher importance than those which, two months after, set the whole Church in a flame. And yet, notwithstanding Luther's challenge, they

* Eccio nostro eruditissimo et ingeniosissimo viro exhibete, ut audiam et videam quid vocet illas. (L. Epp. i. p. 63.)

passed unnoticed. They were read, at the most, in the precincts of the school, and they made no sensation beyond its bounds. The reason of this was that they contained only academic propositions, and theological doctrines; whilst the theses which followed had immediate reference to an evil which had grown up in the midst of the people, and overflowed Germany on all sides. So long as Luther confined himself to bringing forth long-forgotten doctrine, no response was heard. When he pointed to the abuses which offended all minds, every one gave ear.

Nevertheless, Luther, in both cases, did but design to raise one of those theological discussions then frequent in the University. His ideas did not range beyond that circle. He had no thought of becoming a Reformer. He had a low opinion of his own powers, and his humility even amounted to mistrust and anxiety, "I deserve,—such is my ignorance,"—said he, "nothing better than to be hidden in a corner unknown to every one."* But a powerful hand drew him forth from this corner, where he would have wished to remain unknown to the world. An occurrence, which did not depend on Luther's will, threw him on the field of battle, and the conflict began. It is this providential circumstance that the progress of events calls on us to narrate.

* L. Opp. (W.) xviii. 1944.

BOOK III.

THE INDULGENCES, AND THE THESES.

1517—1518.

A GREAT agitation reigned, at that time, among the people of Germany. The Church had opened a vast market on the earth. Judging from the crowd of buyers, and the noise and jests of the dealers, we might call it a fair; but a fair held by monks. The merchandise they extolled, offering it at a reduced price, was, said they, the salvation of souls!

The dealers passed through the country in a gay carriage, escorted by three horsemen, in great state, and spending freely. One might have thought it some dignitary on a royal progress, with his attendants and officers, and not a common dealer, or a begging monk. When the procession approached a town, a messenger waited on the magistrate: "The grace of God, and of the Holy Father, is at your gates!" said the envoy. Instantly every thing was in motion in the place. The clergy, the priests, the nuns, the council, the schoolmasters, the trades, with their flags,—men and women, young and old, went forth to meet the merchants, with lighted tapers in their hands, advancing to the sound of music, and of all the bells of the place; "so that," says an historian, "they could not have given a grander welcome to God himself." Salutations being exchanged, the whole procession moved

toward the church. The Pontiff's bull of grace was borne in front, on a velvet cushion, or on cloth of gold. The chief vendor of indulgences followed, supporting a large red wooden cross; and the whole procession moved in this manner, amidst singing, prayers, and the smoke of incense. The sound of organs, and a concert of instruments, received the monkish dealer and his attendants into the church. The cross he bore with him was erected in front of the altar: on it was hung the Pope's arms; and, as long as it remained there, the clergy of the place, the penitentiaries, and the sub-commissioners, with white wands in their hands, came every day after vespers, or before the salutation, to do homage to it.* This great bustle excited a lively sensation in the quiet towns of Germany.

One person in particular drew the attention of the spectators in these sales. It was he who bore the great red cross and had the most prominent part assigned to him. He was clothed in the habit of the Dominicans, and his port was lofty. His voice was sonorous, and he seemed yet in the prime of his strength, though he was past his sixty-third year.† This man, who was the son of a goldsmith of Leipsic named Diez, bore the name of John Diezel or Tetzel. He had studied in his native town, had taken his bachelor's degree in 1487, and entered two years later into the order of the Dominicans. Numerous honours had been accumulated on him. Bachelor of Theology, Prior of the

* Instruction of the Archbishop of Mentz to the Sub-commissioners of the Indulgence, &c. art. 8.

† Ingenio ferox et corpore robustus. (Cochl. 5.)

Dominicans, Apostolical Commissioner, Inquisitor, (*hereticæ pravitatis inquisitor,*) he had ever since the year 1502, filled the office of an agent for the sale of indulgences. The experience he had acquired as a subordinate functionary had very early raised him to the station of chief commissioner. He had an allowance of 80 florins per month, all his expenses defrayed, and he was allowed a carriage and three horses; but we may readily imagine that his indirect emoluments far exceeded his allowances. In 1507, he gained in two days at Freyberg 2000 florins. If his occupation resembled that of a mountebank, he had also the morals of one. Convicted at Inspruck of adultery and abominable profligacy, he was near paying the forfeit of his life. The Emperor Maximilian had ordered that he should be put in a sack and thrown into the river. The Elector Frederic of Saxony had interceded for him, and obtained his pardon.* But the lesson he had received had not taught him more decency. He carried about with him two of his children. Miltitz, the Pope's legate, cites the fact in one of his letters.† It would have been hard to find in all the cloisters of Germany a man more adapted to the traffic with which he was charged. To the theology of a monk, and the zeal and spirit of an inquisitor, he united the greatest effrontery. What most helped him in his office was the facility he displayed in the invention of the strange stories with which the taste of the common people is generally

* Welchen Churfürst Friederich vom Sack zu Inspruck er beten Hatte. (Mathes. x.)

† L. Opp. (W.) xv. 862.

pleased. No means came amiss to him to fill his coffers. Lifting up his voice and giving loose to a coarse volubility, he offered his indulgences to all comers, and excelled any salesman at a fair in recommending his merchandise.*

As soon as the cross was elevated with the Pope's arms suspended upon it, Tetzel ascended the pulpit, and, with a bold tone, began, in the presence of the crowd whom the ceremony had drawn to the sacred spot, to exalt the efficacy of indulgences. The people listened and wondered at the admirable virtues ascribed to them. A Jesuit historian says himself, in speaking of the Dominican friars whom Tetzel had associated with him:—"Some of these preachers did not fail, as usual, to distort their subject, and so to exaggerate the value of the indulgences as to lead the people to believe that, as soon as they gave their money, they were certain of salvation and of the deliverance of souls from purgatory."†

If such were the pupils, we may imagine what lengths the master went. Let us hear one of these harangues, pronounced after the erection of the cross.

"Indulgences," said he, "are the most precious and sublime of God's gifts.

"This cross"—(pointing to the red cross)—"has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ.‡

* Circumferuntur venales indulgentiæ in his regionibus a Tecelio, Dominicano impudentissimo sycophantâ. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

† Hist. de Lutheranisme par le P. Maimbourg de la compagnie de Jesus. 1681, p. 21.

‡ L. Opp. (W.) xxii. 1393.

"Draw near, and I will give you letters, duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall be all forgiven you.

"I would not exchange my privileges for those of Saint Peter in heaven, for I have saved more souls with my indulgences than he with his sermons.

"There is no sin so great that the indulgence cannot remit it, and even if any one should (which is doubtless impossible) ravish the Holy Virgin Mother of God, let him pay,—let him only pay largely, and it shall be forgiven him.*

"Even repentance is not indispensable.

"But more than all this: indulgences save not the living alone, they also save the dead.

"Ye priests, ye nobles, ye tradesmen, ye wives, ye maidens, and ye young men hearken to your departed parents and friends, who cry to you from the bottomless abyss: 'We are enduring horrible torment! a small alms would deliver us;—you can give it, and you will not!'"

A shudder ran through his hearers at these words, uttered by the formidable voice of the mountebank monk.

"The very moment," continued Tetzel, "that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies free to heaven.†

* Tetzel defended and maintained this assertion in his antitheses, published the same year. (Th. 99, 100, 101.)—Sub-commissariis, insuper ac prædicatoribus veniarum imponere, ut si quis per impossibile Dei genetricem semper virginem violasset, quod eundem indulgentiarum vigore absolvere possent, luce clarus est. (Positiones fratris I. Tezelii quibus defendit indulgentias contra Lutherum.)

† Th. 56. (Ibid.)

"O, senseless people, and almost like to beasts, who do not comprehend the grace so richly offered! This day, heaven is on all sides open. Do you now refuse to enter? When then do you intend to come in? This day you may redeem many souls. Dull and heedless man, with ten groschen you can deliver your father from purgatory, and you are so ungrateful that you will not rescue him. In the day of judgment, my conscience will be clear; but you will be punished the more severely for neglecting so great a salvation. I protest, that though you should have only one coat, you ought to strip it off and sell it, to purchase this grace. Our Lord God no longer deals with us as God. He has given all power to the Pope!"

Then, having recourse to other inducements, he added:—"Do you know why our most Holy Lord distributes so rich a grace? The dilapidated Church of St. Peter and St. Paul is to be restored, so as to be unparalleled in the whole earth. That church contains the bodies of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, and a vast company of martyrs. Those sacred bodies, owing to the presesnt condition of the edifice, are now, alas! continually trodden, flooded, polluted, dishonoured, and rotting in rain and hail. Ah! shall those holy ashes be suffered to remain degraded in the mire?"*

This touch of description never failed to produce an impression on many hearers. There was an eager desire to aid poor Leo X. who had not the means of sheltering from the rain the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul!

* Instruction of the Archbishop of Mentz, &c.

The speaker next proceeded to declaim against the disputers who should question, and the traitors who should oppose his mission:—"I declare them all excommunicated!"

Then turning to the docile souls among his hearers, and impiously perverting the Scripture: "Blessed," said he, "blessed are the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and many kings have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them." And as a finish to his address, pointing to the strong box in which the money was received, he generally concluded his moving discourse by thrice calling on the people: "Bring your money! bring money! bring money!" "He uttered this cry with such a dreadful bellowing," observes Luther, "that one might have thought some wild bull was rushing among the people and goring them with his horns."* The moment he had made an end, he came down the steps of the pulpit, ran towards the strong box, and in sight of all the people, threw in a piece of silver with a loud sound.†

Such were the discourses that Germany heard with astonishment, in the days when God was preparing Luther.

The sermon ended, the indulgence was considered as having "established its throne in the place with due solemnity." Confessionals, surmounted with

* Resolut. on the 32nd Thesis.

† Teutzel, Reformationgesch. Myconii Ref. Hist. Instruction of the Archbishop of Mentz to the Sub-commissioners of the indulgence.—Theses of Luther.

the Pope's arms, were prepared. The sub-commissioners and confessors chosen were held to represent the apostolic penitentiaries, or absolving priests of Rome, at the period of a great jubilee; and on each of their confessionals were inscribed their names and titles.*

Then the people came in crowds to the confessors. They came, not with contrite hearts, but with money in their hands. Men, women, the young, the poor, and those who lived by alms,—every one then found money. The absolving priest, after again setting forth the indulgence, thus addressed the penitents: "How much money can you, in your conscience, spare to obtain so perfect a remission?" "This question," said the Archbishop of Mentz, in his instructions to the commissioners, "must be put at the moment, in order that the penitents may be better disposed to contribute."

These conditions fulfilled were all that was necessary. In the Pope's bull, something was indeed said of the repentance of the heart and confession of the lips; but Tetzel and his companions cautiously abstained from all mention of these; otherwise their coffers might have remained empty. The archiepiscopal instructions forbade even to mention conversion or contrition. Three great benefits were proclaimed. It is sufficient to notice the first. "The first benefit we announce," said the commissioners, acting on their instructions, "is the complete pardon of all sins; and it is not possible to speak of any greater benefit than this, since man who lives in sin is deprived of the divine favour,

* Instruction, etc. 5. 69.

and by this complete pardon he recovers the grace of God.* Now we affirm, that to obtain these great blessings, it is only necessary to purchase an indulgence.† And as to those who desire to deliver souls from purgatory, and to procure for them the forgiveness of all their sins, let them put their money in the chest; but it is not needful that they should feel sorrow of heart, or make confession with the lips.‡ Let them only hasten to bring their money, for they will thus do a work most profitable to departed souls, and to the building of the Church of St. Peter." Greater blessings could not be proposed, nor at a lower cost.

Confession being gone through, (and it was soon despatched,) the faithful hastened to the vendor. Only one was commissioned to sell. He had his counter close to the cross. He turned a scrutinising glance on those who came. He examined their manner, step, and attire, and demanded a sum in proportion to the apparent circumstances of the party presenting himself. Kings, queens, princes, archbishops, bishops, &c. were to pay, according to the regulation, for an ordinary indulgence, twenty-five ducats; abbots, counts, barons, &c. ten. The other nobles, superiors, and all who had an annual income of 500 florins, were to pay six. Those who had an income of 200 florins, one; the rest, half a florin. And further, if this scale could not in every

* Die erste Gnade ist die vollkommene Vergebung aller Sünden &c. Instruction 19.

† Nun den Beichtbrief zu kaufen. (Ibid. 36.)

‡ Auch ist nicht nöthig das sie in dem Herzen zerknirscht sind, und mit dem Mund gebeichtet haben. (Ibid. 38.)

instance he observed, full power was given to the apostolic commissary, and the whole might be arranged according to the dictates of sound reason, and the generosity of the giver.* For particular sins Tetzel had a private scale. Polygamy cost six ducats; sacrilege and perjury, nine ducats; murder, eight; witchcraft, two. Samson, who carried on in Switzerland the same traffic as Tetzel in Germany, had rather a different scale. He charged for infanticide four livres tournois; for a parricide or fratricide, one ducat.†

The apostolical commissaries sometimes encountered difficulties in their commerce. It often happened, as well in the towns as in the villages, that husbands were opposed to the traffic, and forbade their wives to carry anything to the dealers. What were their superstitious partners to do? "Have you not your marriage portion, or some other property, at your disposal?" asked the vendors. "In that case you can dispose of it for this holy purpose, without your husband's consent."‡

The hand that delivered the indulgence could not receive the money: that was forbidden under the severest penalties;—there was good reason to fear that hand might not always be trustworthy. The penitent was himself to drop the price of his pardon into the chest.§ An angry look was cast on those who dared to close their purses.‖

* Nach den Sätzen der gesunden Vernunft, nach ihrer Magnificenz und Freigebigkeit. (Instruction, &c. 26.)

† Müller's Reliq. iii. p. 264.

‡ Wider den Willen ihres Mannes. (Instruction, 27.)

§ Ib. 87, 90, 91.

‖ Luth. Opp. Leipz. xvii. 79.

If, among those who pressed into the confessionals, there came one whose crimes had been public, and yet untouched by the civil laws, such person was obliged, first of all, to do public penance. He was conducted to a chapel, or sacristy; there he was stripped of his clothes, his shoes taken off his feet, and he left in his shirt. They made him fold his arms upon his breast, placed a light in one hand, and a wax taper in the other. Then the penitent walked at the head of the procession, which passed to the red cross. He kneeled till the singing and the collect were concluded; then the commissary gave out the psalm, "*Miserere mei.*" The confessors immediately approached the penitent, and led him across the station towards the commissary, who, taking the rod, and striking him thrice gently on the back,* said: "God take pity on thee, and pardon thy sin!" After this, he gave out the *Kyrie eleison*, &c. Then the penitent being led back, and placed before the cross, the confessor pronounced the apostolical absolution, and declared him reinstated in the company of the faithful. Wretched mummeries, concluded by a passage of Scripture, which, at such a time, was a profanation!

We will give one of these letters of absolution. It is worth while to know the contents of these diplomas, which gave occasion to the Reformation.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, "N.N., and absolve thee by the merits of his most "holy sufferings! And I, in virtue of the apostolic "power committed to me, absolve thee from all

* Dreimal gelind auf den Rücken. (Instruction.)

"ecclesiastical censures, judgments, and penalties "that thou mayst have merited; and further, from "all excesses, sins, and crimes that thou mayst "have committed, however great and enormous they "may be, and of whatever kind,—even though they "should be reserved to our holy father the Pope, "and to the Apostolic See. I efface all the stains "of weakness, and all traces of the shame that thou "mays thave drawn upon thyself by such actions. "I remit the pains thou wouldst have had to endure "in purgatory. I receive thee again to the sacra- "ments of the Church. I hereby reincorporate "thee in the communion of the saints, and restore "thee to the innocence and purity of thy baptism; "so that, at the moment of death, the gate of the "place of torment shall be shut against thee, and "the gate of the paradise of joy shall be opened unto "thee. And if thou shouldst live long, this grace "continueth unchangeable, till the time of thy end.

"In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of "the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"The Brother, John Tetzel, commissary, hath 'gned this with his own hand."

In this document, we see with what art presumptuous and false doctrines were interspersed among sacred and Christian expressions.

All the faithful were to come and confess in the spot where the red cross was set up. None but the sick, old men, and women with child, were exempt. If, however, there was in the neighbourhood any noble in his castle, or wealthy man in his palace, his personal attendance was dispensed with.* For

* Instr. 9.

he might not care to mingle with this mob of people, and his money was worth fetching from his residence.

If there was any convent whose superiors, disapproving Tetzel's traffic, forbade their monks to resort to the places where the indulgence was offered,—means were still found to remedy this. Confessors were sent to them, commissioned to absolve them contrary to the rules of their order and the will of their superiors.* Not a vein of the mine was left unexplored.

Then came what was the object and end of the whole affair,—the reckoning of the money. To guard against all risks, the chest had three keys:—one was in the keeping of Tetzel, the other with the delegated treasurer of the house of Fugger of Augsburg, to whom, some time before, this vast speculation had been farmed; and the third was lodged with the civil authority. When the appointed day arrived, the chest was opened in presence of a public notary, and the whole contents carefully counted, and entered in the books. Was it not fit that Christ should arise and drive out these buyers and sellers from the temple?

The mission being ended, the dealers relaxed in amusement, after their labours. The instruction of the commissary-general did, it is true, forbid their frequenting taverns and disreputable places.† But they paid little regard to this interdict. Sin must have had few terrors for men who carried on so easy a traffic in it. "The mendicant friars led an irregular life," says a Roman Catholic historian;

* Instr. 69. † Ibid. 4.

"they spent in taverns, gaming houses, and houses of ill-fame, what the people had scraped together from their poverty."* It is even affirmed that, when they were in the taverns, they would sometimes stake on dice the salvation of souls.†

But let us see to what scenes this sale of the pardon of sins gave rise in Germany. There are some incidents, which of themselves are a picture of the times. We like to let those whose history we write speak for themselves.

At Magdeburg, Tetzel refused to absolve a rich lady, unless she paid down one hundred florins. The lady consulted her usual confessor, who was a Franciscan. "God gives us remission of sins freely," answered he; "He does not sell it." Yet he entreated her not to mention what he had said. But the report of an opinion so adverse to his gains having reached the ears of Tetzel,—"Such an adviser," he exclaimed, "deserves to be expelled or burnt alive."‡

Tetzel found but few sufficiently enlightened, and still fewer bold enough to resist him. In general he could easily manage the superstitious crowd. He had erected the red cross of indulgences at Zwickau, and the good people of the place had hastened to pour in the money that was to liberate souls. He was about to leave with a full purse. The evening before his departure, the chaplains and their acolytes called upon him to give them a farewell repast. The request was reasonable; but what was to be

* Sarpi, Concile de Trente, p. 5.

† Schröck, K. G. v. d. R. l. 116.

‡ Schultet. Annal. Evangel. p. iv.

done?—the money was already counted and sealed up. In the morning he had the large bell tolled. A crowd hurried to the church:—every one thought something extraordinary had happened, since the period of the station had expired. "I had intended," said he, "to take my departure this morning, but last night I was awakened by groans. I listened: they proceeded from the cemetery. Alas! it was a poor soul that called me, and entreated to be delivered from the torment that consumed it. I therefore have tarried one day longer, that I might move christian hearts to compassion for this unhappy soul. Myself will be the first to contribute;—but he who will not follow my example will be worthy of all condemnation." What heart would not answer to such an appeal. Besides, who can tell what soul thus cries from the tomb? The gifts were many; and Tetzel, with the chaplains and acolytes, sat down to a merry feast paid for by offerings for the poor soul of Zwickau.*

The dealers in indulgences had established themselves at Hagenau in 1517. The wife of a shoemaker, profiting by the permission given in the instruction of the Commissary-general, had procured, against her husband's will, a letter of indulgence, and had paid for it a gold florin. Shortly after she died; and the widower omitting to have mass said for the repose of her soul, the curate charged him with contempt of religion, and the judge of Hagenau summoned him to appear before him. The shoemaker put in his pocket his wife's indulgence, and repaired to the place of summons. "Is

* Löschers, Ref. Acta, I. 404. L. Opp. xv. 443, &c.

your wife dead?" asked the judge.—"Yes," answered the shoemaker. "What have you done with her?" "I buried her and commended her soul to God." "But have you had a mass said for the salvation of her soul?" "I have not:—it was not necessary:—she went to heaven in the moment of her death." "How do you know that?" "Here is the evidence of it." The widower drew from his pocket the indulgence, and the judge, in presence of the curate, read, in so many words, that in the moment of death, the woman who had received it would go, not into purgatory, but straight into heaven. "If the curate pretends that a mass is necessary after that," said the shoemaker, "my wife has been cheated by our Holy Father the Pope; but if she has not been cheated, then the curate is deceiving me." There was no reply to this defence, and the accused was acquitted.* It was thus that the good sense of the people disposed of these impostures.

One day, when Tetzel was preaching at Leipsic, and had introduced into his preaching some of these stories of which we have given a specimen, two students indignantly left the church, exclaiming—"It is not possible to listen any longer to the ridiculous and childish tales of that monk."† One of these students, it is affirmed, was young Camerarius who was subsequently the friend of Melancthon, and wrote his life.

But, of all the young men of that period, Tetzel made the strongest impression on Myconius—subse-

* Musculi Loci communes. p. 362.

† Hoffmanns Reformationgesch. v. Leipz. p. 32.

quently celebrated as a Reformer and an historian of the Reformation. Myconius had received a religious education. "My son," said his father, who was a pious Franconian, "pray frequently; for all things are freely given to us by God alone. The blood of Christ," he added, "is the only ransom for the sins of the whole world. Oh, my son! if there were but three men to be saved by the blood of Christ, only BELIEVE;—and be sure that you shall be one of those three.* It is an insult to the Saviour's blood to doubt its power to save." Then, proceeding to warn his son against the trade that was beginning in Germany,—"The Roman indulgences," said he, "are nets to fish for money, and delude the simple. Remission of sins and eternal life are not to be purchased by money."

At thirteen, Frederic was sent to the school of Annaberg, to finish his studies. Soon after, Tetzel arrived in this town, and remained there for two months. The people flocked in crowds to hear him preach. "There is," exclaimed Tetzel, with a voice of thunder, "no other means of obtaining eternal life save the satisfaction of good works. But this satisfaction is out of man's power. His only resource is to purchase it from the Roman Pontiff."†

When Tetzel was on the point of leaving Annaberg his appeal became more urgent. "Soon," said he, with a threatening accent, "I shall take

* Si tantum tres homines essent salvandi per sanguinem Christi, certo statueret unum se esse ex tribus illis. (Melch. Adam. Vita Mycon.)

† Si nummis redimatur a Pontifice Romano. (Melch. Adam.)

down that cross, and close the gate of heaven,* and put out that sun of grace which shines before your eyes." Then, resuming a tenderer strain of exhortation,—"This," said he, "is the day of salvation, this is the accepted time." And as a last effort, the pontifical Stentor,† speaking to the inhabitants of a country rich in mines, exclaimed, "Inhabitants of Annaberg! bring hither your money; contribute liberally in aid of indulgences, and all your mines and mountains shall be filled with pure silver." Finally, at Easter, he proclaimed that he would distribute his letters to the poor gratuitously, and for the love of God.

The young Myconius happened to be among the hearers. He felt a wish to take advantage of this offer. "I am a poor sinner," said he, addressing in Latin the commissioners to whom he applied, "and I need a free pardon." "Those only," answered the dealers, "can share in the merits of Christ who stretch forth a helping hand to the Church—that is, give their money." "What mean, then," said Myconius, "those promises of free distribution posted up on the gates and walls of the churches?" "Give at least a *gros*," said Tetzel's people, after having vainly interceded for the young man with their master. "I cannot."—"Only six deniers."—"I have not even so much." The Dominicans then began to apprehend that he meant to entrap them. "Listen," said they, "we will give you six deniers."—On which the young man, raising his voice with indignation, replied: "I will have none

* Clausurum januam cœli. (Melch. Adam.)

† Stentor pontificius. (Ib.)

of the indulgences that are bought and sold. If I desired to purchase them I should only have to sell one of my books. What I want is a free pardon,—and for the love of God. You will have to account to God for having, for the sake of six deniers, missed the salvation of a soul." "Ah! ah!" said they, "who sent you to tempt us?" "No one," replied the young man: "the desire of receiving the grace of God could alone induce me to appear before such great lords." He left them.

"I was grieved," says he, "at being thus sent away without pity. But I felt in myself a Comforter, who whispered that there is a God in heaven who forgives repentant souls without money and without price, for the sake of his Son, Jesus Christ. As I left these people, the Holy Spirit touched my heart. I burst into tears,—and with sighs and groans prayed to the Lord: O God, since these men have refused remission of sins because I had no money to pay, do thou, Lord, take pity on me, and forgive them in mere mercy. I retired to my chamber. I took my crucifix from my desk, placed it on my chair, and kneeled before it. I cannot here put down what I experienced. I asked of God to be my father, and to make me what he would have me. I felt my nature changed, converted, transformed. What had before delighted me was now distasteful. To live with God, and to please him, became my most ardent—my single desire."*

Thus Tetzel himself was preparing the Reformation. By scandalous abuses he made way for a

* Letter of Myconius to Eberus in Hechtii Vita Tezelii. Wittemb. i. p. 14.

purer teaching; and the generous indignation which he excited in youthful minds was destined one day to break forth with power. We may judge of this by the following incident.

A Saxon gentleman had heard Tetzel at Leipsic, and was much shocked by his impostures. He went to the monk, and inquired if he was authorised to pardon sins in intention, or such as the applicant intended to commit? "Assuredly," answered Tetzel; "I have full power from the Pope to do so." "Well," returned the gentleman, "I want to take some slight revenge on one of my enemies, without attempting his life. I will pay you ten crowns, if you will give me a letter of indulgence that shall bear me harmless." Tetzel made some scruples; they struck their bargain for thirty crowns. Shortly after, the monk set out from Leipsic. The gentleman, attended by his servants, laid wait for him in a wood between Jüterboch and Treblin,—fell upon him, gave him a beating, and carried off the rich chest of indulgence-money the inquisitor had with him. Tetzel clamoured against this act of violence, and brought an action before the judges. But the gentleman showed the letter signed by Tetzel himself, which exempted him beforehand from all responsibility. Duke George, who had at first been much irritated at this action, upon seeing this writing, ordered that the accused should be acquitted.*

This traffic everywhere agitated the minds of the people, and was everywhere discussed. It was the subject of conversation in castles, academies, and

* Albinus Meissn. Chronik. L. W. (W.) xv. 446, &c. Hechtius in Vitâ Tezelii.

private houses, as well as in inns, taverns, and all places of resort.* Opinions were divided; some believed, some were indignant. But the sober part of the nation rejected with disgust the whole system of indulgences. This doctrine was so opposed to the Scriptures and to sound sense, that all men who possessed any knowledge of the Bible, or any natural acuteness, had already condemned it in their hearts, and only waited for a signal to oppose it. On the other hand, mockers found abundant cause for ridicule. The people, who had been irritated for so many years by the ill conduct of the priests, and whom the fear of punishment had alone retained in any outward respect, gave loose to all their animosity; and on all sides were heard complaints and sarcasms upon the love of money that infected the clergy.

The people went still farther. They impugned the power of the keys and the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. "Why," said they, "does not the Pope deliver at once all the souls from purgatory by a holy charity, and on account of the great misery of those souls, since he frees so great a number for the sake of perishable gain and the cathedral of St. Peter?"

"Why do we continue to observe the festivals and anniversaries for the dead? Why does not the Pope surrender, or why does he not permit people to resume, the benefices and prebends founded in favour of the dead, since now it is useless, and even wrong, to pray for those whom indulgences have for ever set free? What is this new kind of holiness of God and of the Pope, that for the sake of money

* L. Opp. (Leipz.) xvii. p. 111, 116.

they grant to a wicked man, and an enemy of God, the power of delivering from purgatory a pious soul, beloved by the Lord, rather than themselves deliver it freely from love for it, and on account of its great misery?"*

Accounts were circulated of the gross and immoral conduct of the traffickers in indulgences. "To pay," said they, "what they owe to drivers who carry them and their goods; to inn-keepers, at whose houses they lodge, or to any one who does them service, they give a letter of indulgence for four, five, or as many souls as they wish." Thus the brevets of salvation were circulated in the inns and markets, like bank notes or paper money. "*Bring hither your money,*" said the common people, "is the beginning, the middle, and the end of their sermons."†

A miner of Schneeberg, meeting a seller of indulgences, inquired: "Must we then believe what you have often said of the power of indulgences and of the authority of the Pope, and think that we can redeem a soul from purgatory by casting a penny into the chest?" The dealer in indulgences affirmed that it was so. "Ah!" replied the miner, "what a cruel man the Pope must be, thus to leave a poor soul to suffer so long in the flames for a wretched penny! If he has no ready money, let him collect a few hundred thousand crowns, and deliver all these souls by one act. Even we poor folks would willingly pay him the principal and interest."

* Luther's Theses on the Indulgences. (Th. 82, 83, 84.)

† L. Opp. (Leipz.) xvii. 79.

The people of Germany were weary of the shameful traffic that was carrying on in the midst of them. They could no longer bear the impostures of these Romish tricksters, as Luther remarks.* Yet no bishop or divine dared lay a finger on their quackery and deceit. The minds of men were in suspense. They asked each other, if God would not raise up some powerful instrument for the work that was required to be done. But such an one was no where visible.

The Pope who then filled the pontifical throne was not a Borgia, but Leo X. of the illustrious family of the Medici. He was a man of talent, open-hearted, kind, and indulgent. His manners were affable, his liberality unbounded, and his morals greatly superior to those of his court. Nevertheless the Cardinal Pallavicini confesses they were not quite free from reproach. To these amiable qualities he added many of the accomplishments that form a great prince. He was, especially, a liberal patron of the arts and sciences. The earliest Italian comedies were represented in his presence, and most of the dramas of his time were honoured by his attendance. He was passionately fond of music, —his palace daily resounded with musical instruments, and he was often heard humming the airs that had been sung before him. Fond of magnificence he spared no expense in feastings, public games, theatrical entertainments, and gifts. No court surpassed in splendour or in pleasures that

* Fessi erant Germani omnes, ferendis explicationibus, nundinationibus, et infinitis imposturis Romanensium nebulonum. (L. Opp, Lat. in præf.)

of the Sovereign Pontiff. So that when news was brought that Julian Medici was about to choose Rome as a place of residence for himself, and his young bride, Cardinal Bibliena, the most influential of Leo's council, exclaimed, "God be praised! We wanted nothing here but a female circle." A "female circle" was felt requisite to complete the attractions of the Pope's court. But a feeling of religion was a thing of which Leo was entirely ignorant. "His manners," says Sarpi, "were so charming, that he would have been a perfect man, if he had had some knowledge in religious matters, and a little more inclination for piety, concerning which he never troubled himself."*

Leo was in great want of money. He had to provide for his vast expenses; to satisfy all demands on his liberality; to fill with gold the purse he every day threw to the people; to defray the costs of the licentious plays at the Vatican; to gratify the continual demands of his relations and of courtiers who were addicted to voluptuousness; to portion his sister, who had married Prince Cibo, a natural son of Pope Innocent VIII.; and to bear all the expenses attending his taste for literature, arts, and pleasures. His cousin, Cardinal Pucci, who was as skilful in the art of amassing money as Leo was prodigal in spending, advised him to have recourse to indulgences. The Pope, therefore, published a bull, proclaiming a general indulgence, the product

* Sarpi, Concile de Trente, p. 4. Pallavicini, though labouring to refute Sarpi, confirms and even aggravates the charge:—suo plane officio defuit (Leo). . . venationes, facetias, pompas adeo frequentes . . . (Concil. Trid. Hist. i. p. 8, 9.)

of which should be appropriated, he said, to the building of St. Peter's Church, that splendid monument of ecclesiastical magnificence. In a letter given at Rome, under the seal of the fisherman, in November, 1517, Leo required from his commissioner of indulgences 147 gold ducats, "to pay for a manuscript of the 33rd book of Livy." Of all the uses he made of the money extorted from the Germans, this was undoubtedly the best. But it was strange to deliver souls from purgatory that he might purchase a manuscript of the wars of the Romans!

There was then in Germany a young prince who was in many respects a counterpart of Leo X.:—this was Albert, the younger brother of the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg. This young man, at the age of twenty-four, had been made Archbishop and Elector of Mentz and of Magdeburg; two years after he was made Cardinal. Albert had neither the virtues nor the vices which have often characterised the dignitaries of the Church. Young, volatile, worldly-minded, but not devoid of generous sentiments, he plainly saw many of the abuses of Catholicism, and cared little for the fanatical monks that surrounded him. His equity inclined him to acknowledge, at least in part, the justice of what the friends of the Gospel required. In his heart he was not greatly opposed to Luther. Capito, one of the most distinguished Reformers, was for a long time his chaplain, counsellor, and intimate confidant. Albert regularly attended his preaching. "He did not despise the Gospel," says Capito; "on the contrary, he highly esteemed it, and for

a long time prevented the monks from attacking Luther." But he would have had the latter abstain from compromising him, and beware, while pointing out the errors in doctrine and the vices of the inferior clergy, of bringing to light the faults of the bishops and princes. Above all, he feared to find his own name thrust forward in the contest. "See," said Capito to Luther, at a subsequent period, deluding himself as is usual in such cases, "see the example of Christ and of his Apostles: they reproved the Pharisees and the incestuous person in the church of Corinth, but did not do so *by name*. You do not know what is passing in the hearts of the bishops. There is, perhaps, more good in them than you think." But the frivolous and profane turn of Albert's character was likely to indispose him for the Reformation, even more than the susceptibilities and fears of his self-love. Affable in his manners, witty, graceful, of expensive and even dissipated habits, delighting in the pleasures of the table, and in rich equipages, houses, licentious pursuits, and literary society, this young Archbishop and Elector was in Germany what Leo was at Rome. His court was one of the most splendid of the Empire. He was ready to sacrifice to pleasure and grandeur all the foretastes of truth that might visit his soul. Yet there was in him, to the last, a sort of struggle with his better convictions; and he more than once manifested moderation and equity.

Like Leo, Albert was in want of money. Some rich merchants of Augsburg, named Fugger, had made him some advances. He was pressed for the

means of liquidating his debts; nay, more, although he had obtained two archbishoprics and a bishopric, he had not enough to pay for his *pallium* at Rome. This ornament, made of white wool, interspersed with black crosses, and blessed by the Pope, who was accustomed to send it to the archbishops as a sign of their jurisdiction, cost them 26,000, or, as some say, 30,000 florins.

It was quite natural that Albert should form the project of resorting to the same means as his superior to obtain money. He solicited from the Pope the contract for the "farming" of all the indulgences, or, as they expressed it at Rome, "the contract for the sins of the Germans."

At times the Popes kept the speculation in their own hands. Sometimes they farmed it to others; as, in certain States, is still done with gaming houses. Albert proposed to Leo to divide the profits. Leo, in accepting the bargain, required immediate payment of the price of the pallium. Albert, who was all the while depending on the indulgences for the means of discharging this claim, applied to the Fuggers, who, thinking it a safe investment, made, on certain conditions, the required advances; and were appointed cashiers in this great undertaking. They were at this period bankers to many princes, and were afterwards made counts for the services they had rendered.

The Pope and Archbishop having thus divided beforehand the spoils of the credulous souls of Germany, it was necessary to carry out the project, and to find some one to undertake the trouble of realizing it. The charge was first offered to the Franciscans,

and their guardian was associated in it with Albert. But the Franciscans did not desire any part in this undertaking, which was already in ill repute among good people. The Augustine monks, who were more enlightened than the other religious orders, would have cared still less to join in it. Meanwhile, the Franciscans feared to offend the Pope, who had lately sent to their general, Forli, a cardinal's hat, which cost that poor mendicant order 30,000 florins. The guardian therefore judged it most prudent not to meet the offer by a direct refusal; but he raised all kinds of difficulties in the way of Albert; they never could agree, so that the Elector was glad to accept the proposal that he should take the sole charge of the concern. The Dominicans, on their part, coveted a share in the lucrative trade about to be opened. Tetzel, already notorious in such matters, hastened to Mentz, and tendered his services to the Elector. His proved usefulness in publishing the indulgences for the knights of the Teutonic Order of Prussia and Livonia was recollected, and he was accepted; and thus it was that all this traffic passed into the hands of his order.*

The first time Luther heard speak of Tetzel was, as far as we are informed, in the year 1516, at Grimma, when he was commencing his visitation of the churches. Some one came and told Staupitz, who was still with Luther, that a seller of indulgences, named Tetzel, was making much noise at Würtzen. Some of his extravagant expressions being quoted, Luther was indignant, and exclaimed, "God willing, I will make a hole in his drum."†

* Seckendorf. 42. † Lingke, Reisegesch. Luthers, p. 27.

Tetzel in his return from Berlin, where he had met with a most friendly reception from the Elector Joachim, brother of the farmer-general, took up his abode at Jüterboch. Staupitz, availing himself of the confidence the Elector Frederic reposed in him, had repeatedly called his attention to the abuse of the indulgences, and the disgraceful proceedings of the collectors.* The Princes of Saxony, indignant at the shameful traffic, had forbidden Tetzel to enter their provinces. He was therefore compelled to stop on the territory of his patron, the Archbishop of Magdeburg. But he drew as near as he could to Saxony. At Jüterboch he was only four miles distant from Wittemberg. "This great purse-drainer," said Luther, "went boldly to work, beating up the country all round, so that the money began to leap out of every man's purse, and fall into his chest." The people flocked in crowds from Wittemberg, to the indulgence market at Jüterboch.

Luther was still at this time full of respect for the Church and for the Pope. He says himself, "I was then a monk, a papist of the maddest,—so infatuated and even steeped in the Romish doctrines, that I would willingly have helped to kill any one who should have had the audacity to refuse the smallest act of obedience to the Pope. I was a true Saul, like many others still living."† But, at the same time his heart was ready to take fire for what

* Instillans ejus pectori frequentes indulgentiarum abusus. (Cochlæus. 4.)

† Monachum, et papistam insanissimum, ita ebrium, imò submersum in dogmatibus papæ, &c. In præf. Opp. Witt. I.

he thought the truth, and against what, in his judgment, was error. "I was a young doctor, fresh from the anvil, glowing and rejoicing in the glory of the Lord."*

One day Luther was at confessional in Wittemberg. Several residents of that town successively presented themselves; they confessed themselves guilty of great irregularities, adultery, licentiousness, usury, unjust gains: such were the things men came to talk of with a minister of God's word, who must one day give an account of their souls. He reproved, rebuked, and instructed. But what was his astonishment, when these persons replied that they did not intend to abandon their sins! The pious monk, shocked at this, declared, that since they would not promise to change their habits of life, he could not absolve them. Then it was that these poor creatures appealed to their letters of indulgence; they shewed them, and contended for their efficacy. But Luther replied, that he had nothing to do with their paper; and he added, "If you do not turn from the evil of your way, you will all perish." They exclaimed against this, and renewed their application; but the doctor was immoveable. "They must cease," he said, "to do evil, and learn to do well, or otherwise no absolution. Have a care," added he, "how you give ear to the indulgences; you have something better to do than to buy licences which they offer you for paltry pence."†

Much alarmed, these inhabitants of Wittemberg

* L. Opp. (W.) xxii.

† Cœpi dissuadere populis et eos dehortari ne indulgentiarum clamoribus aures præberent. (L. Opp. lat. in præf.)

quickly returned to Tetzel, and told him that an Augustine monk treated his letters with contempt. Tetzel, at this, bellowed with anger. He held forth in the pulpit, used insulting expressions and curses,* and, to strike the people with the more terror, he had a fire lighted several times in the grand square, and declared that he was ordered by the Pope to burn the heretics, who should dare to oppose his most holy indulgences.

Such was the incident that first gave occasion to the Reformation, though not the cause of it. A pastor sees his sheep going on in a way that would lead them to their ruin;—he seeks to guide them out of it. He has as yet no thought of reforming the Church and the world. He has seen Rome and its corruption; but he does not erect himself against Rome. He discerns some of the abuses under which Christendom groans, but he has no thought of correcting those abuses. He does not desire to constitute himself a Reformer. † He has no more plan in his mind for the reform of the Church, than he had previously had for that which had been wrought in his own soul. God himself designed a Reformation, and to make Luther the instrument of its accomplishment. The same remedy, of which the efficacy was proved by the removal of his own distress, it was God's purpose that he should apply to the distresses of Christendom. He remains

* Wütet, schilt, und maledeiet graulich auf dem Predigtstuhl. (Myconius, Reformationgesch.)

† Hæc initia fuerunt hujus controversiæ, in quâ Lutherus nihil suspicans aut somnians de futurâ mutatione ritum, &c. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

quietly in the circle assigned to him. He goes simply where his master calls him. He is discharging at Wittemberg his duties as professor, preacher, pastor. He is seated in the temple, where the members of his church come to open their hearts to him. It is there, on that field, that Evil attacks, and Error seeks him out. Those about him would hinder him from discharging his duty. His conscience, bound to the word of God, is aroused. Is it not God who calls him? Resistance is a duty, —*therefore* it is also a right;—he *must* speak. Such was the course of the events occurring in the providence of that God, who had decreed to revive Christianity by the agency of a miner's son; and to refine in his furnace the corrupted teaching of the Church.*

After what has been stated, it is needless to refute a lying charge invented by some enemies of Luther, and not till after his death. It has been said it was a jealousy on the part of the monks of his order,—the mortification of seeing the Dominicans, and not the Augustines, who had previously held it, entrusted with this shameful and disreputable commerce, that led the Doctor of Wittemberg to attack Tetzel, and his teaching. The well ascertained fact that this traffic had been at first offered to the Franciscans, who would not have it, suffices to refute this invention repeated by writers who do but copy one another. Cardinal Pallavicini himself declares† that the Augustines had never held this

* Mathesius.—Die verseurte Lehr durch den Ofen gehen. (p. 10.)

† Falsum est consuevisse hoc munus injungi Eremitanis S. Augustini. . . . (p. 14.)

office. Besides, we have seen the struggle of Luther's soul. His conduct needs no other explanation. He could not refrain from confessing aloud the doctrine to which he owed his happiness. In Christianity, when a man finds a treasure for himself, he hastens to impart it to others. In our day men have abandoned such puerile and unworthy attempts to account for the great revolution of the sixteenth century. It is recognized that there must be some more powerful lever to raise a whole world,—and that the Reformation was not in Luther merely,—but that the age in which he lived must necessarily have given birth to it.

Luther, called on alike by obedience to the truth of God and by charity to man, ascended the pulpit. He warned his hearers as was his duty, as he himself tells us.* His Prince had obtained from the Pope some special indulgences for the church in the castle of Wittemberg. Some of the blows, which he is about to strike at the indulgences of the inquisitor, may easily fall on those of the Elector. It matters not; he will brave his disgrace. If he sought to please man, he would not be the servant of Christ.

"No one can shew from the Scriptures that God's justice requires a penalty or satisfaction from the sinner," said the faithful minister of the word to the people of Wittemberg. "The only duty it imposes on him is a true repentance, a sincere change of heart, a resolution to bear the cross of Christ, and to strive to do good works. It is a great error to seek *ourselves* to satisfy God's justice for

* "Saüberlich."

our sins, for God ever pardons them *freely* by an inestimable grace.

"The Christian Church, it is true, requires somewhat from the sinner, and what she requires she may remit. But that is all. And furthermore, these indulgences of the Church are only tolerated out of regard for slothful and imperfect Christians, who will not employ themselves zealously in good works; for they excite no one to sanctification, but leave every one in his lowness and imperfection."

Then, passing to the pretext on which the indulgences were proclaimed, he continued: "It would be much better to contribute to the building of St. Peter's from love to God, than to buy indulgences for such a purpose. But say you shall we then not buy them? I have already said as much, and I repeat it:—my advice is that none should buy them. Leave them for drowsy Christians, but do you keep yourselves separate from such. Let the faithful be turned from indulgences, and exhorted to the works they neglect."

Then, glancing at his adversaries, Luther concluded in these words: "And if some cry that I am a heretic,—for the truth which I preach is prejudicial to their coffers—I pay little regard to their clamours;—they are men of gloomy or sickly minds, who have never felt the truths of the Bible, never read the Christian doctrine, never understood their own teachers, and are perishing in the tattered rags of their vain opinions.* However, God grant to them and to us a right understanding!

* Sondern in ihren löchreichen und zerrissenen Opinien viel nahe verwesen. (L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 119.)

Amen." This said, the Doctor came down from the pulpit, leaving his hearers much affected by this bold harangue.

This sermon was printed and made a deep impression on all who read it. Tetzel answered it, and Luther defended himself; but this was at a later period, in 1518.

The feast of All Saints was at hand. Some chroniclers relate at this time, a circumstance, which, however little important it may be to the history of this epoch, may still serve to characterise it. It is a dream of the Elector,—beyond reasonable doubt true in the essential parts, though some circumstances may have been added by those who related it. It is mentioned by Seckendorf.* "The fear of giving occasion to his adversaries to say that Luther's doctrine rested upon dreams, has perhaps prevented other historians from speaking of it," observes this respectable writer.

The Elector, Frederic of Saxony, these chroniclers tell us, was then at his castle of Schweinitz, six leagues from Wittemberg. The morning of the 31st of October, being with his brother, Duke John, (who was then co-regent, and who reigned alone after his death,) and with his Chancellor, the Elector said to the Duke:—

"Brother, I must tell you a dream that I had

* It is found in Löscher, i. 46, &c. Zenzels Anf und Fortg. der Ref. Sünkers Ehrenged. p. 148. Lehmanns Beschr. Meissen. Erzgeb. &c. and in a manuscript of the Archives of Weimar, written from the dictation of Spalatin. It is from this manuscript, published at the last jubilee of the Reformation (1817), that we take the account of this dream.

last night, and of which I should be very glad to know the meaning. It is so deeply engraved on my mind, that I should not forget it were I to live a thousand years, for I dreamt it thrice, and each time with some new circumstances."

Duke John.—"Is it a good or bad dream?"

The Elector.—"I know not: God knows."

Duke John.—"Do not make yourself uneasy about it: tell it me."

The Elector.—"Having gone to bed last night, tired and dispirited, I fell asleep soon after saying my prayers, and slept quietly about two hours and a half. I then woke; and continued engaged till midnight with a variety of thoughts. I considered how I should keep the festival of All Saints; I prayed for the poor souls in purgatory, and besought God to guide me, my counsellors and my people, into all truth. I fell asleep again: and then I dreamt that Almighty God sent a monk to me, who was the true son of the Apostle Paul. All the saints accompanied him, according to the command of God, in order to testify to me in his favour, and to declare that he was not come with any fraudulent design, but that all he did was agreeable to the will of God. They asked me, at the same time, graciously to allow him to write something on the church door of the castle of Wittemberg; which request I granted by the mouth of the Chancellor. Thereupon the monk went his way, and began to write, but in such large characters, that I could read from Schweinitz what he was writing. The pen that he used was so long that its extremity reached even to Rome, wounded the ears of a lion *(Leo)* that was couched

there, and shook the triple crown on the Pope's head. All the cardinals and princes, running hastily towards him, endeavoured to support it. You and I, brother, among the rest, attempted to support it; I put out my arm: but, at that moment I woke, with my arm extended, in great alarm, and very angry with the monk who handled his pen so awkwardly. I recovered myself a little:—it was only a dream.

"But I was still half asleep, and I closed my eyes again. My dream continued. The lion, still disturbed by the pen, began to roar with all his might, so that the whole city of Rome and all the states of the holy Empire ran to enquire what was the matter. The Pope called upon us to restrain the monk, and addressed himself particularly to me, because he lived in my country. I woke again: I repeated a *Pater noster*. I besought God to preserve the holy Father, and I then fell asleep again.

"After this, I dreamt that all the Princes of the Empire, you and I amongst the rest, were flocking to Rome, trying one after the other to break this pen; but the more we exerted ourselves the stiffer it became; it resisted as if it had been made of iron; at length we were tired. I then asked the monk, (for I seemed to be sometimes at Rome and sometimes at Wittemberg), where he had obtained that pen, and why it was so strong? 'The pen,' replied he, 'once belonged to the wing of a goose of Bohemia, a hundred years old.* I received it from

* John Huss.—This is one of the particulars that may have been added at a subsequent period, in allusion to the well known saying of Huss himself.

one of my old schoolmasters; its strength is—that no one can take the pith out of it; and I am myself quite surprised at it.'—Suddenly I heard a loud cry: from the monk's long pen had issued a great number of other pens. I woke a third time: it was daylight."

Duke John.—"Master Chancellor, what do you think of it? Oh! that we had here a Joseph or a Daniel enlightened by God!"

The Chancellor.—"Your highnesses know the vulgar proverb, that the dreams of maidens, scholars, and nobles, have generally some hidden meaning; but we shall not know the meaning of this for some time, till the things to which it relates shall have taken place. Therefore, commend the accomplishment of it to God, and leave it in his hands."

Duke John.—"I agree with you, master Chancellor: it is not right that we should puzzle our heads about the meaning of this: God will turn all to his glory."

The Elector.—"God in his mercy grant it! However, I shall never forget the dream. I have thought of one interpretation;—but I keep it to myself. Time will perhaps show if I have guessed right."

Such, according to the manuscript of Weimar, was the conversation that took place on the morning of the 31st of October at Schweinitz. Let us next see what happened in the evening of the same day at Wittemberg. We now return to the firmer ground of history.

The admonitions of Luther had produced but little effect: Tetzel, without disturbing himself, continued his traffic and his impious addresses to the

people.* Shall Luther submit to these grievous abuses? shall he keep silence? As a pastor, he has powerfully exhorted those who attended his ministry; and as a preacher, he has uttered a warning voice from the pulpit. He has yet to speak as a divine; he has yet to address himself, not merely to a few persons in the confessional, not merely to the assembly of the church of Wittemberg, but to all those who are, like himself, teachers of God's word. His resolution is formed.

It was not the Church that he thought of attacking; it was not the Pope he was about to call to account; on the contrary, his respect for the Head of the Church would not allow him to be any longer silent in regard to assumptions, by which the Pope's credit was disparaged. He must take his part against those audacious men who dared to mix up his venerable name with their disgraceful traffic. Far from thinking of a revolution that should overthrow the primacy of Rome, Luther conceived that he had the Pope and Catholicism with him, against the effrontery of the monks.†

The feast of All Saints was a very important day at Wittemberg, and especially at the church which the Elector had built and filled with relics. On this occasion those relics, encased in gold and silver, and adorned with precious stones, were set out to dazzle the eyes of the people with their magnifi-

* Cujus impiis et nefariis concionibus incitatus Lutherus studio pietatis ardens edidit propositiones de indulgentiis. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

† Et in iis certus mihi videbar, me habiturum patronum papam cujus fiduciâ tunc fortiter nitebar. (L. Opp. Lat. in præf.)

cence.* Whoever, on that day, visited the church, and there confessed himself, obtained a plenary indulgence. On that great day the pilgrims flocked in crowds to Wittemberg.

Luther, whose plan was already formed, went boldly on the evening of the 31st of October, 1517, to the church, towards which the superstitious crowds of pilgrims were flocking, and affixed to the door ninety-five theses or propositions, against the doctrine of indulgences. Neither the Elector, nor Staupitz, nor Spalatin, nor any of his friends, even those most intimate with him, had any previous intimation of his design.†

Luther therein declared, in a kind of preamble, that he had written these theses in a spirit of sincere charity, and with the express desire of bringing the truth to light. He declared himself ready to defend them, next day at the university itself, against all opposers.

The attention excited by them was very great; they were read and repeated on all sides. The pilgrims, the university, and the whole city were soon in confusion. The following are some of the propositions written by the pen of the monk, and posted on the door of the church of Wittemberg:

"1. When our Master and Lord Jesus Christ says, 'Repent,' he means that the whole life of his faithful servants upon earth should be a constant and continual repentance.

* . . . . Quas magnifico apparatu publice populis ostendi curavit. (Cochlæus, 4.)

† Cum hujus disputationis nullus etiam intimorum amicorum fuerit conscius. (L. Epp. i. 186.)

"2. This cannot be understood of the sacrament of penance, (that is to say of confession and satisfaction), as administered by the priest.

"3. However, our Lord does not here speak only of inward repentance: inward repentance is invalid, if it does not produce outwardly every kind of mortification of the flesh.

"4. Repentance and grief,—that is to say, true penitence, last as long as a man is displeased with himself,—that is to say, till he passes from this life to eternal life.

"5. The Pope has no power or intention to remit any other penalty than that which he has imposed, according to his good pleasure, or conformably to the canons, that is to say, to the Papal ordinances.

"6. The Pope cannot remit any condemnation; but can only declare and confirm the remission that God himself has given; except only in cases that belong to him. If he does otherwise, the condemnation continues the same.

"8. The laws of ecclesiastical penance can only be imposed on the living, and in no wise respect the dead.

"21. The commissioners of indulgences are in error in saying, that, through the indulgence of the Pope, man is delivered from all punishment, and saved.

"25. The same power, that the Pope has over purgatory in the Church at large, is possessed by every bishop in his diocese and every curate in his parish.

"27. Those persons preach human inventions

who pretend that, at the very moment when the money sounds in the strong box, the soul escapes from purgatory.

" 28. This is certain: that, as soon as the money sounds, avarice and love of gain come in, grow and multiply. But the assistance and prayers of the Church depend only on the will and good pleasure of God.

" 32. Those who fancy themselves sure of their salvation by indulgences will go to the devil with those who teach them this doctrine.

" 35. They teach anti-christian doctrines who profess that, to deliver a soul from purgatory, or to purchase an indulgence, there is no need of sorrow or of repentance.

" 36. Every christian who feels true repentance for his sins has perfect remission from the punishment and from the sin, without the need of indulgences.

" 37. Every true christian, dead, or living, is a partaker of all the riches of Christ, or of the Church, by the gift of God, and without any letter of indulgence.

" 38. Yet we must not despise the Pope's distributive and pardoning power, for his pardon is a declaration of God's pardon.

" 40. Repentance and real grief seek and love chastening; but the softness of the indulgence relaxes the fear of chastisement, and makes us averse from it.

" 42. We must teach christians, that the Pope neither expects nor wishes us to compare the act of preaching indulgences with any charitable work whatsoever.

"43. We must teach christians, that he who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does better than he who buys an indulgence.

"44. For the work of charity makes charity to abound, and renders man more pious; whilst the indulgence makes him not better, but only more confident in himself, and more secure from punishment.

"45. We must teach christians, that he who sees his neighbour in want, and, notwithstanding that, buys an indulgence, does not in reality acquire the Pope's indulgence, and draws down on himself the anger of God.

"46. We must teach christians, that if they have no superfluity, they are bound to keep for their families wherewith to procure necessaries, and they ought not to waste their money on indulgences.

"47. We must teach christians, that the purchase of an indulgence is not a matter of commandment, but a thing in which they are left at liberty.

"48. We must teach christians, that the Pope, having more need of the prayer of faith, than of money, desires prayer rather than money, when he distributes indulgences.

"49. We must teach christians, that the Pope's indulgence is good, if we do not put our trust in it; but that nothing can be more hurtful, if it leads us to neglect piety.

"50. We must teach christians, that if the Pope knew the exactions of the preachers of indulgences, he would rather that the metropolitan church of St. Peter were burnt to ashes, than see it built up with the skin, the flesh, and bones of his flock.

"51. We must teach christians, that the Pope,

as in duty bound, would willingly give his own money, though it should be necessary to sell the metropolitan church of St. Peter for the purpose, to the poor people, whom the preachers of indulgences now rob of their last penny.

"52. To hope to be saved by indulgences is to hope in lies and vanity; even although the commissioner of indulgences, nay, though even the Pope himself, should pledge his own soul in attestation of their efficacy.

"53. They are the enemies of the Pope and of Christ, who, to favour the preaching of indulgences, forbid the preaching of the word of God.

"55. The Pope can think no otherwise than this: If the indulgence (which is the lesser) is celebrated with the sound of a bell, and pomp and ceremony, much more is it right to celebrate the preaching of the Gospel (which is the greater) with a hundred bells, and a hundred times more pomp and ceremony.

"62. The true and precious treasure of the Church is the holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.

"65. The treasures of the Gospel are nets, in which it formerly happened that the souls of rich men, living at ease, were taken.

"66. But the treasures of the indulgence are nets, wherewith now they fish for rich men's wealth.

"67. It is the duty of bishops and pastors to receive with all respect the commissioners of the apostolical indulgences.

"68. But it is much more their duty to satisfy themselves, by their presence, that the said commis-

sioners do not preach the dreams of their own fancy instead of the Pope's orders.

"71. Cursed be whosoever speaks against the Pope's indulgence.

"72. But blessed be he who opposes the foolish and reckless speeches of the preachers of indulgences.

"78. The Pope's indulgence cannot take away the least of our daily sins,—so far as the blame or offence of it is concerned.

"79. To say that the cross, hung with the Pope's arms, is as powerful as the cross of Christ, is blasphemy.

"80. The bishops, pastors, and divines, who allow these things to be taught to the people, will have to give account for it.

"81. This shameless preaching,—these impudent praises of indulgences,—make it difficult for the learned to defend the dignity and honour of the Pope against the calumnies of preachers, and the subtle and artful questions of the common people.

"86. Why, say they, does not the Pope build the metropolitan church of St. Peter's with his own money, rather than with that of poor christians, seeing that he is richer than the richest Crassus?

"92. May we therefore be rid of those preachers, who say to the Church of Christ 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.

"94. We must exhort christians to endeavour to follow Christ, their head, under the cross, through death and hell.

"95. For it is better, through much tribulation, to enter into the kingdom of heaven, than to gain

a carnal security by the consolations of a false peace."

Here then was the beginning of the work. The germs of the Reformation were inclosed in these theses of Luther. They attacked the indulgences, and this drew notice;—but under this attack was found a principle, which, while it drew much less of the people's attention, was one day to overturn the edifice of the Papacy. The evangelic doctrine of a *free and gracious remission of sins* was for the first time publicly professed. The work must now go forward. In fact it was evident that whoever should receive that faith in the remission of sins proclaimed by the Doctor of Wittemberg,—whoever should possess that repentance, that conversion, and that sanctification, of which he urged the necessity,—would no longer regard human ordinances, would throw off the bandages and restraints of Rome, and acquire the liberty of God's children. All errors would fall before this truth. It was by this that the light had just entered the mind of Luther; it was likewise by it that the light was ordained to spread in the Church. A clear perception of this truth was what had been wanting to the earlier Reformers. Hence the unprofitableness of their efforts. Luther clearly saw, at a later period, that in proclaiming justification by faith, he had laid the axe to the root of the tree. "It is doctrine that we attack in the followers of the Papacy," said he. "Huss and Wickliff only attacked their life; but in attacking their doctrine, we seize the goose by the throat. Every thing depends on the word of God, which the Pope has taken from us and falsified.

I have overcome the Pope, because my doctrine is according to God; and his is the doctrine of the devil.*

We also, in our day, have lost sight of this cardinal doctrine of justification by faith, though not in the same way as our fathers. "In Luther's time," says one of our contemporaries,† "the remission of sins cost some money at least; but in our days, every one takes it gratuitously to himself." There is much analogy between these two false notions. In our error there is perhaps more forgetfulness of God than that which prevailed in the 16th century. The principle of justification by God's free grace, which delivered the Church from such deep darkness at the period of the Reformation, can alone renew this generation, terminate its doubts and waverings, destroy the egotism which consumes it, establish morality and uprightness among the nations,—in a word, bring back to God the world which has forsaken him.

But if these theses of Luther were strong in the strength of the truth they proclaimed, they were no less powerful in the faith of him who declared himself their champion. He had boldly drawn the sword of the word. He had done this in reliance on the power of truth. He had felt that, in dependence on the promises of God, something might be hazarded, as the world would express it. "Let him who resolves to begin a good work," (said he, speaking of this bold attack), "undertake it, relying on

* Wenn man die Lehre angreifft, so wird die Gans am Krage gegriffen. (L. Opp. (W.) xxii. p. 1369.)

† Harms de Kiel.

the goodness of the thing itself, and in no degree on any help or comfort to be derived from men; —moreover, let him not fear men, nor the whole world. For that text shall never be falsified: 'It is good to trust in the Lord, and he that trusteth in him shall *certainly* never be confounded.' But as for him who will not, or cannot, venture something, trusting in God, let him carefully abstain from undertaking any thing."* We cannot doubt that Luther, after having fixed his theses on the door of the church of All Saints, withdrew to his peaceful cell, filled with that peace and joy which flow from an action done in the name of the Lord, and for the cause of everlasting truth.

Whatever boldness may appear in these theses, we still discover in them the monk who would refuse to allow a single doubt as to the authority of the Roman See. But in attacking the doctrine of indulgences, Luther had unconsciously borne hard upon many errors, the discovery of which could not be agreeable to the Pope, since it must necessarily lead, sooner or later, to the discrediting his supremacy. Luther's views, at that time, did not extend so far; but he felt the boldness of the step he had just taken, and thought therefore that he ought to qualify it, as far as he could, consistently with the respect he owed to the truth. He consequently put forth these theses only as doubtful propositions, in respect to which he solicited information from the learned; and he added (in accordance, it is true, with an established custom), a solemn protestation, by which he declared, that he

* L. Opp. Leipz. vi. p. 518.

did not mean to say or affirm any thing that was not founded on the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, and the rights and decretals of the court of Rome.

Often did Luther, in after times, when he contemplated the vast and unexpected consequences of this courageous step, feel amazed at himself, and unable to comprehend how he had dared to take it. The truth was, an invisible and all-powerful hand here held the guiding rein, and urged on the herald of truth in a road which he knew not, and from the difficulties of which he would perhaps have shrunk, had he been aware of them, and advanced alone and of his own will. "I entered on this controversy," said he, "without any settled purpose or inclination, and entirely unprepared . . . I call God to witness this, who sees the heart."*

Luther had learned what was the source of these abuses. A little book was brought him, adorned with the arms of the Archbishop of Mentz and Magdeburg, containing rules to be followed in the sale of the indulgences. Thus it was this young prelate, this accomplished prince, who had prescribed, or at least sanctioned, this imposture. Luther saw in him only a superior, whom it was his duty to honour and respect.† He resolved no longer to beat the air, but rather to apply to those who had the office of government in the church. He addressed to him a letter full of frankness and

* Casu enim, non voluntate nec studio, in has turbas incidi; Deum ipsum testor. (L. Opp. lat. in præf.)

† Domino suo et pastori in Christo venerabiliter metuendo. (Epp. i. p. 68.)

humility. Luther wrote to Albert the same day that he placarded his theses.

"Forgive me, most reverend Father in Christ, and most illustrious Prince, if I, who am of the very meanest of men,* have the boldness to write to your sublime grandeur. The Lord Jesus is my witness that, feeling how small and contemptible I am, I have long delayed to do so. Yet let your Highness look upon an atom of dust, and in your episcopal compassion graciously receive my request.

"Men are carrying throughout the country the papal indulgence, under your Grace's name. I will not so much accuse the clamours of the preachers (for I have not heard them), as the false opinions of simple and ignorant people, who, when they purchase these indulgences, think themselves sure of their salvation.

"Great God! the souls confided, my very excellent Father, to your care, are trained not for life, but for death. The strict reckoning that will one day be required of you increases every day. I could no longer keep silence. No! man is not saved by the work or the office of his bishop. Scarcely even is the righteous saved, and the way that leadeth unto life is narrow. Why then do the preachers of indulgences, by empty fictions, lull the people in carnal security.

"The indulgence alone, if we can give ear to them, is to be proclaimed and exalted. What is it not the chief and only duty of the bishops to teach the people the Gospel and the love of Christ?†

* Fex hominum. (Epp. i. p. 68.)

† Ut populus Evangelium discat atque charitatem Christi. (Epp. i. p. 68.)

Christ himself has no where told us to preach indulgences, but he has enjoined us to preach the Gospel. How horrid and dangerous then it is for a bishop to allow the Gospel to be withheld, and the indulgences alone to be continually sounded in the ears of the people!

"Most worthy Father in God, in the Instruction of the Commissioners, which was published in your Grace's name, (certainly without your knowledge,) it is said, that the indulgence is the most precious treasure, that by it man is reconciled to God, and that repentance is not needed by those who purchase it.

"What can I, what ought I to do, most worthy bishop and serene prince? Oh! I entreat your Highness, by the Lord Jesus Christ, to look into this matter with paternal vigilance, to suppress this book entirely, and to order the preachers to address to the people different instructions. If you neglect to do this, prepare yourself to hear some day a voice lifted that shall refute these preachers, to the great disgrace of your most serene Highness."

Luther, at the same time, sent his theses to the Archbishop, and asked him in a postscript to read them, in order to convince himself of the little dependence that was to be placed on the doctrine of indulgences.

Thus, the only wish of Luther was that the watchmen of the Church should arouse themselves, and endeavour to put a stop to the evils that were laying it waste. Nothing could be more noble or respectful than this letter of a monk to one of the greatest princes of the Church and of the Empire.

Never did any one act more in the spirit of Christ's precept: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." This conduct bears no resemblance to that of the reckless revolutionist who despises dominions, and speaks evil of dignities. It is the conscientious appeal of a Christian and a priest, who renders honour to all, but, above all, has the fear of God in his heart. But all his entreaties and supplications were useless. Young Albert, wholly engrossed by pleasure and the pursuits of ambition, made no reply to this solemn address. The Bishop of Brandenburg, Luther's ordinary, a learned and pious man, to whom he also sent the theses, replied that he was attacking the power of the Church; that he would bring upon himself much trouble and grief; that the attempt would be found too much for his strength, and that he would do well to give up the affair altogether.* The princes of the Church closed their ears to the voice of God, which was making itself heard in so affecting and energetic a manner through the instrumentality of Luther. They would not understand the signs of the times; they were struck with that blindness which has already accelerated the ruin of so many powers and dignities. "They both thought at that time," as Luther afterwards observed, "that the Pope would be too powerful for a poor mendicant monk like me."

But Luther could judge better than the bishops of the fatal effect of indulgences on the lives and morals of the people; for he was intimately connected with them. He saw constantly and close

* Ersollte still halten; es wäre eine grosse Sache. (Math. 13.)

at hand, what the bishops only knew from reports that could not be depended on. If he found no help from the bishops, God was not wanting to him. The head of the Church, who sits in the heavens, and to whom alone all power is given upon earth, had himself prepared the soil, and committed the seed to the hand of his servant; he gave wings to those seeds of truth, and scattered them in a moment over the whole field of the church.

No one appeared next day at the university to impugn the propositions of Luther. Tetzel's traffic was too generally decried and too disreputable for any other person than himself, or one of his followers, to dare to accept the challenge. But these theses were destined to find an echo beyond the vaulted roof of the academy. Hardly had they been nailed to the church door of the castle of Wittemberg, when the feeble sound of the hammer was succeeded by a thunderclap, which shook the very foundations of proud Rome; threatened with instant ruin the walls, gates, and pillars of the Papacy; stunned and terrified its champions; and at the same time awakened from the slumber of error many thousands of men.*

These theses spread with the rapidity of lightning. Before a month had elapsed, they had found their way to Rome. "In the space of a fortnight," says a contemporary historian, "they had spread over Germany, and within a month they had run through all Christendom, as if angels themselves had been the bearers of them to all men. It is difficult to conceive the stir they occasioned."† They

* Walther, Nachr. v. Luther. p. 45.

† Myconius, Hist. Ref. p. 23.

were afterwards translated into Dutch, and into Spanish; and a traveller carried them for sale as far as Jerusalem. "Every one," said Luther, "was complaining of the indulgences, and, as all the bishops and doctors had kept silence, and no one was inclined to take the bull by the horns, poor Luther became a famous doctor; because, at last, said they, one doctor was found who dared grapple with him. But I did not like this glory, and I thought the song in too high a key for my voice."*

Many of the pilgrims who had flocked from all sides to Wittemberg at the feast of All Saints, took back with them—not the indulgences—but the famous theses of the Augustine monk. Thus they helped to diffuse them. Every one read them, meditating and commenting on them. Men conversed about them in convents and in colleges.† The devout monks who had entered the convents that they might save their souls, and all upright and well intentioned men rejoiced at so simple and striking a confession of the truth, and heartily desired that Luther might continue the work he had begun. "I observe," says one very worthy of credit, and a great rival of the Reformer (Erasmus), speaking to a cardinal, "that the more irreproachable men's morals, and the more evangelical their piety, the less are they opposed to Luther. His life is commended even by those who cannot endure his opinions. The world was weary of a method of teaching in which so many puerile fictions and human inventions were mixed up, and thirsted for that

* Das Lied wollte meiner Stimme zu hoch wurden. (L. Opp.)

† In alle hohe Schulen und Klöster. (Math. 13.)

living, pure, and hidden stream which flows from the veins of the apostles and evangelists. The genius of Luther was such as fitted him for these things, and his zeal would naturally take fire at so noble an enterprise."*

To form an idea of the various but prodigious effect that these propositions produced in Germany, we should endeavour to follow them wherever they penetrated,—into the study of the learned, the cell of the monk, and the palaces of the princes.

Reuchlin received a copy of them. He was tired of the rude conflict he had waged with the monks. The strength evinced by the new combatant in these theses cheered the depressed spirits of the old champion of letters, and gave fresh joy to his drooping heart. "Thanks be to God," exclaimed he, after having read them, "they have now found a man who will give them so much to do, that they will be very glad to leave my old age to pass away in peace."

The cautious Erasmus was in the Low Countries when the theses reached him. He inwardly rejoiced to see his secret desires for the reform of abuses so courageously expressed; he commended their author, only exhorting him to more moderation and prudence. And yet, when some one in his presence blamed Luther's violence, "God," said Erasmus, "has sent a physician who cuts into the flesh, because, without such an one, the disorder would become incurable." And when afterwards the Elector of Saxony asked his opinion of Luther's

* Ad hoc præstandum mihi videbatur ille, ut natura compositus et accensus studio. (Erasm. Epp. Campegio Cardinali, 1. p. 650.)

affair,—"I am not at all surprised," answered he, smiling, "that he has occasioned so much disturbance, for he has committed two unpardonable offences,—he has attacked the tiara of the Pope, and the bellies of the monks."*

Doctor Flek, prior of the cloister of Steinlausitz, had for some time discontinued reading mass, but had told no one his true reason. One day he found the theses of Luther in the convent refectory: he took them up and read; and no sooner had he gone through some of them, than, unable to suppress his joy, he exclaimed, "Oh! now at last, one is come who has been long waited for, and will tell you all;—look there, monks!" Thence glancing into futurity, as Mathesius remarks, and playing on the word Wittemberg: "All the world," said he, "will come to seek wisdom on that mountain, and will find it."† He wrote to the Doctor, urging him by all means to continue the glorious struggle with courage. Luther calls him "a man full of joy and consolation."

The ancient and famous episcopal see of Wurzburg was then filled by a pious, kind, and prudent man, Laurence of Bibra. When a gentleman came to announce to him that he destined his daughter for the cloister, "Better give her a husband," said he. And he added, "If you want money to do so, I will lend you." The Emperor and all the princes had the highest esteem for him. He deplored the disorders of the Church, and especially of the convents. The theses reached him also in his episcopal

* Müller's Denkw. iv. 256.

† Alle Welt von diesem Weissenberg, Weissheit holen und bekommen. (p. 13.)

palace, he read them with great joy, and publicly declared that he approved Luther's view. He afterwards wrote to the Elector Frederic: "Do not let the pious Doctor Martin Luther leave you, for the charges against him are unjust." The Elector rejoiced at this testimony, copied it with his own hand, and sent it to the Reformer.

The Emperor Maximilian, the predecessor of Charles V., himself read and admired the theses of the monk of Wittemberg. He perceived the wide grasp of his thoughts;—he foresaw that this obscure Augustine might probably become a powerful ally to Germany, in her struggle with Rome. Accordingly, he sent this message to the Elector of Saxony: "Take care of the monk Luther, for a time may come when we may have need of him:"* and shortly after, meeting Pfeffinger, the confidential adviser of the Elector, at the Diet,—"Well!" said he, "what is your Augustine about? Truly his propositions are not to be despised. He will show wonders to the monks."†

Even at Rome, and at the Vatican, the theses were not so ill received. Leo X. regarded them rather with the feelings of a friend of learning than a Pope. The amusement they gave him made him overlook the stern truths they contained; and when Silvester Prierias, the master of the sacred palace, besought him to treat Luther as a heretic, he answered: "That same brother,‡ Martin Luther, is a

* Dasser uns den Munch Luther fleissig beware. (Math. 15.)

† Schmidt, Brand. Reformationsgesch. p. 124.

‡ Che frate Martino Luthero haveva un bellissimo ingegno, e che coteste erano invidie fratesche. (Brandelli, a contemporary of Leo and a Dominican. Hist. Trag. pars 3.)

man of talent, and all that is said against him is mere monkish jealousy."

There were few on whom the theses of Luther had more effect than on the student of Annaberg, whom Tetzel had so unmercifully repulsed. Myconius had entered into a convent. That very night he had dreamed that he saw a wide field covered with ripe grain. "Reap," said the voice of him who seemed to conduct him; and when he excused himself as unskilled, his guide showed him a reaper labouring at his work with inconceivable activity. "Follow him, and do as he does,"* said his guide. Myconius, panting, like Luther, for holiness, gave himself up in the convent to watchings, fastings, macerations, and all the works of man's invention. But in the end he abandoned all hope of attaining the object of his pursuit. He left off study and applied himself only to manual labours. Sometimes he bound books, sometimes he wrought as a turner, or at some other mechanical occupation. This activity of body was unavailing, however, to quiet his troubled conscience. God had spoken to him; he could not relapse into his former sleep. This distress of mind lasted several years. Men sometimes imagine that the paths of the Reformers were altogether pleasant, and that when once they had rejected the burthensome observances of the Church, nothing remained but ease and delight. Such persons do not know that they only arrived at the truth by internal struggles a thousand times more painful than the observances to which servile spirits readily submitted.

* Melch. Adami Vita Myconii.

At length the year 1517 arrived :—the theses of Luther were published ; they ran through all lands ; —they arrived at the convent in which the student of Annaberg was immured. He retired with another monk, John Voit, into a corner of the cloister, that he might read them undisturbed.* There was indeed the truth he had learned from his father,— his eyes were opened,—he felt a voice within him responding to that which then resounded throughout Germany ; and a rich comfort filled his heart. " I see clearly" said he, " that Martin Luther is the reaper whom I beheld in my dream, and who taught me to gather in the ripe corn." Immediately he began to profess the doctrine which Luther had proclaimed. The monks listened to him with dismay, combated his new opinions, and exclaimed against Luther and his convent. " That convent," replied Myconius, " is as the Sepulchre of our Lord; some men attempt to hinder Christ's resurrection, but they cannot succeed in their attempt." At last his superiors, seeing that they were unable to convince him, forbade him for a year and a half all intercourse beyond the walls of his convent; prohibiting him from writing or receiving letters; and threatened him with perpetual imprisonment. However, the hour of deliverance came also to him. Appointed shortly after pastor at Zwickau, he was the first who openly declared against the Papacy in the churches of Thuringia. " Then it was that I was enabled," says he, " to labour with my venerable father Luther in the harvest of the Gospel." Jonas

* Legit tunc, cum Johanne Voitio, in angulum abditus, libe[illegible] Lutheri. (Mel.)

has designated him a man capable of all he undertook.*

Doubtless there were other souls besides these to whom the theses of Luther were the signal of life. They kindled a new light in many a cell, cabin, and even palace. Whilst those who sought, in monastic seclusion, a well supplied board, a life of indolence or the reverence of their fellow men, observes Mathesius, heaped reproaches on the Reformer's name,—the monks who lived in prayer, fastings and mortifications, thanked God when they heard the first cry of that eagle predicted by John Huss, a century before.† Even the common people, who understood but little of the theological question, and only knew that this man protested against mendicant friars and indolent monks, hailed him with shouts of joy. An extraordinary sensation was produced in Germany by his bold propositions. But others of his contemporaries foresaw their serious consequences, and the many obstacles they would have to encounter. They loudly expressed their fears, and never rejoiced without trembling.

"I much fear," wrote Bernard Adelman, the excellent canon of Augsburg, to his friend Pirckheimer, "that the worthy man will be after all obliged to yield to the avarice and power of the partisans of indulgences. His remonstrances have had so little effect, that the Bishop of Augsburg, our primate and metropolitan,‡ has just ordered, in the

* Qui potuit quod voluit.

† Darvon Magister Johann. Huss geweissaget. (Math. 13.)

‡ "Totque uxorum vir," adds he. Heumanni Documenta litt. p. 167.

Pope's name, fresh indulgences for St. Peter's at Rome. Let him, without losing time, seek the support of the princes; let him beware of tempting God; for one must be void of common sense not to see the imminent danger in which he stands." Adelman rejoiced greatly when a report was current that King Henry VIII. had invited Luther to England. "He will there," thought he, "be able to teach the truth without molestation." Many there were who thus imagined that the doctrine of the Gospel needed to be supported by the power of princes. They knew not that it advances without any such power, and that often the alliance of this power hinders and weakens it.

The celebrated historian, Albert Kranz, was lying on his death-bed at Hamburgh, when the theses of Luther were brought to him. "Thou hast truth on thy side, brother Martin!" exclaimed the dying man, "but thou wilt not succeed. Poor monk, get thee to thy cell, and cry, O God, have mercy on me!"*

An old priest of Hexter in Westphalia, having received and read the theses in his presbytery, said, in low German, shaking his head: "Dear brother Martin, if you succeed in casting down that purgatory and those sellers of paper, truly you will be a great man." Erbenius, who lived a hundred years later, wrote these lines under the words we have quoted:

Quid verò, nunc si viveret,
Bonus iste clericus diceret? †

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* Frater, abi in cellam, et dic, Miserere mei. (Lindner in Luthers Leben, p. 93.)

† *What would the worthy clerk now say,*
If he were living in our day?

Not only did many of Luther's friends conceive fears from his proceeding; several expressed to him their disapproval.

The Bishop of Brandenburg, grieved at seeing so important a controversy originating in his own diocese, would have wished to stifle it. He resolved to set about it with mildness. "I find," said he to Luther, by the Abbot of Lenin, "nothing in the theses concerning the indulgences at variance with the Catholic faith. I even myself condemn those imprudent proclamations; but for the love of peace, and out of regard to your bishop, cease to write on this subject." Luther was embarrassed that so distinguished an abbot and so great a bishop should address him with such humility. Moved and carried away by the first impulse of his heart, he answered; "I consent; I prefer obedience even to the working of miracles, if that were possible to me."*

The Elector saw with regret the commencement of a contest; legitimate doubtless, but one of which the result could not be foreseen. No prince more sincerely desired to maintain the public peace then Frederic. Yet now what a vast conflagration might not this little fire kindle! what great contentions, what rending asunder of the nations might this quarrel with the monks produce! The Elector sent Luther repeated intimations of his uneasiness on the subject.†

* Bene sum contentus: malo obedire quam miracula facere, etiam si possem. (Epp. i. 71.)

† Suumque dolorem sæpe significavit, metuens discordias majores. (Melanc. Vita Luth.)

In his own order, and even in his convent of Wittemberg, Luther met with disapprobation. The prior and the sub-prior were frightened at the outcry made by Tetzel and all his companions. They went to brother Martin's cell, alarmed and trembling: "Pray," said they, "do not bring disgrace upon your order! The other orders, and especially the Dominicans, are already transported with joy to think that they are not alone in their obloquy." Luther was affected by these words; but soon recovering himself, he answered: "Dear fathers! if the thing is not of God, it will come to nought; if it is, let it go forward." The prior and the sub-prior were silent. "The thing is going forward *still*," adds Luther, after having related this circumstance, "and if it please God, it will go on better and better to the end. Amen."*

Luther had many other attacks of a very different kind to endure. At Erfurth he was accused of violence and pride in the manner in which he condemned the opinions of others; a reproach to which those persons are generally exposed who have that strength of conviction which is produced by the word of God. He was reproached with haste, and with levity.

"They require modesty in me," replied Luther, "and they themselves trample it under foot in the judgment they pass on me! . . . We behold the mote in another's eye, and consider not the beam that is in our own eye. . . . The truth will gain no more by my modesty than it will lose by my rashness."—"I should like to know," continued he, addressing him-

* L. Opp. (L.) vi. p. 518.

self to Lange, "what errors you and your divines have found in my theses? Who does not know that we can seldom advance a new idea without an appearance of pride, and without being accused of seeking quarrels! If humility herself attempted any thing new, those of a different opinion would exclaim that she was proud.* Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death? Because they appeared proud despisers of the wisdom of the times in which they lived, and because they brought forward new truths without having first humbly consulted the oracles of the old opinions."

"Let not the wise men of the present day, therefore, expect from me so much humility, or rather hypocrisy, as to ask their judgment, before I publish that which my duty calls upon me to proclaim. What I am doing will not be effected by the prudence of man, but by the counsel of God. If the work is of God, who shall stop it? If it is not, who can forward it? Not my will, nor theirs, nor ours, but Thy will, thine, holy Father, who art in heaven!"

What boldness, what noble enthusiasm, what trust in God! and especially what truth in these words, and what truth for all times!

However, the reproaches and accusations which were brought against Luther from all sides, did not fail to make some impression upon his mind. He was deceived in his expectations. He had expected to see the heads of the Church, the most distinguished philosophers of the nation, publicly join him; but it was quite otherwise. A word of

* Finge enim ipsam humilitatem nova conari, statim superbiæ subjicietur ab iis qui aliter sapiunt. (L. Epp. i. p. 73.)

encouragement hastily bestowed at the outset was all that the more favourably disposed afforded him; and many of those whom he had regarded with most veneration were loud in their condemnation of him. He felt himself alone in the Church; alone against Rome; alone at the foot of that ancient and formidable citadel, whose foundations reached to the bowels of the earth, and whose walls, ascending to the skies, appeared to deride the presumptuous stroke which his hand had aimed against them.* He was disturbed and dejected at the thought. Doubts, which he thought he had overcome, returned to his mind with fresh force. He trembled to think that he had the whole authority of the Church against him. To withdraw himself from that authority, to resist that voice which nations and ages had humbly obeyed, to set himself in opposition to that Church which he had been accustomed from his infancy to revere as the mother of the faithful; he, a despicable monk,—it was an effort beyond human power.† No one step cost him so much as this, and it was in fact this that decided the fate of the Reformation.

No one can describe better than himself the struggle he then suffered in his mind. "I began this affair," said he, "with great fear and trembling. What was I at that time? a poor, wretched, contemptible friar, more like a corpse than a man.‡ Who was I, to oppose the Pope's majesty, before

* Solus primo eram. (L. Opp. lat. in præf.)

† Concilium immanis audaciæ plenum. (Pallav. i. p. 17.)

‡ Miserrimus tunc fraterculus cadaveri similior quam homini. (L. Opp. lat. i. p. 49.)

which not only the kings of the earth and the whole world trembled; but also, if I may so speak, heaven and hell were constrained to obey the slightest intimation of his will? No one can know what I suffered those first two years, and in what dejection, I might say in what despair, I was often plunged. Those proud spirits who afterwards attacked the Pope with such boldness, can form no idea of my sufferings; though, with all their skill, they could have done him no injury, if Christ had not inflicted upon him, through me, His weak and unworthy instrument, a wound from which he will never recover. But whilst *they* were satisfied to look on and leave me to face the danger alone, I was not so happy, so calm, or so sure of success; for I did not then know many things which now, thanks be to God, I do know. There were, it is true, many pious Christians who were much pleased with my propositions and thought highly of them. But I was not able to recognize these, or look upon them as inspired by the Holy Ghost; I only looked to the Pope, the cardinals, the bishops, the theologians, the jurisconsults, the monks, the priests. It was from thence that I expected the Spirit to breathe. However, after having triumphed, by means of the Scriptures, over all opposing arguments, I at last overcame, by the grace of Christ, with much anguish, labour, and great difficulty, the only argument that still stopped me, namely, 'that I must hear the church;'* for, from my heart, I honoured the church of the Pope

* Et cum omnia argumenta superassem per scripturas, hoc unum cum summa difficultate et augustia, tandem Christo favente, vix superavi, Ecclesiam scilicet audiendam. (L. Opp. lat. i. p. 49.)

as the true church, and I did so with more sincerity and veneration than those disgraceful and infamous corrupters of the church, who, to oppose me, now so much extol it. If I had despised the Pope, as those persons do in their hearts, who praise him so much with their lips, I should have feared that the earth would open at that instant, and swallow me up alive, like Korah and his company."

How honourable are these struggles to Luther's character! what sincerity, what uprightness, do they evince! and how much more worthy of our respect is he rendered by these painful assaults from within and from without, than he could have been by an intrepidity untried by conflict. This travail of his soul is good evidence of the truth and divine nature of his work. We see that the cause and principle of all his actions was from heaven. Who will dare to say, after all the characteristics we have pointed out, that the Reformation was a political affair? No, certainly, it was not the fruit of human policy, but of divine power. If Luther had only been actuated by human passions, he would have yielded to his fears; his disappointments and misgivings would have smothered the fire that had been kindled in his soul, and he would only have shed a transient light upon the Church, as had been done before by so many zealous and pious men, whose names have been handed down to posterity. But now God's time was come; the work was not to be arrested; the enfranchisement of the Church must be accomplished. Luther was destined at least to prepare the way for that complete deliverance and that mighty increase which are promised

to the kingdom of Christ. Accordingly he experienced the truth of that glorious promise: "The youths shall faint, and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles." And the same divine power, which, animating the heart of the Doctor of Wittemberg, had led him to the combat, soon restored his former courage.

The reproaches, the timidity, or the silence of his friends had discouraged him; the attacks of his enemies re-animated him: this is usually the case. The adversaries of the truth, thinking by their violence to do their own work, did in fact the work of God.* Tetzel took up the gauntlet, but with a feeble hand. The sermon of Luther, which had had the same effect upon the common people as the theses had had upon the learned, was the first thing he undertook to answer. He replied to this discourse, sentence by sentence, in his own manner; he then gave notice that he was preparing to confute his adversary more at length, in some theses which he would maintain at the famous university of Frankfort upon the Oder. "Then," said he, referring to the conclusion of Luther's sermon, "every one will be able to discover who is an heresiarch, a heretic, a schismatic,—who is in error, who is rash, who is a slanderer. Then it will be evident to the eyes of all, who has 'a gloomy brain,' who has 'never felt the Bible, read the doctrines of Chris-

* Hi furores Tezelii et ejus sattellitum imponunt necessitatem Luthero de rebus iisdem copiosius disserendi et tuendæ veritatis. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

tianity, and understood his own teachers;'—and in defence of the propositions that I bring forward I am ready to suffer any punishment whatsoever, imprisonment, bastinado, water, or fire."

One thing strikes us in this work of Tetzel's. It is the difference between his German and that of Luther. It seems as if there were a distance of several ages between them. A foreigner especially finds it difficult to understand Tetzel, whilst the language of Luther is almost entirely such as is used at the present day. It is sufficient to compare their writings, to see that Luther is the father of the German language. This is undoubtedly one of the least of his merits, but still it is a merit.

Luther replied to this attack without naming Tetzel;—Tetzel had not named him. But there was no one in Germany who could not have written in the front of their productions the names which the authors thought fit to conceal. Tetzel endeavoured to confound the repentance that God requires with the penitence that the Church imposes; in order to give higher value to his indulgences. Luther undertook to clear up this point.

"To avoid many words," said he, in his own picturesque language, "I give to the winds, (which have more leisure than I have,) his other remarks, which are but paper flowers and dry leaves, and I content myself with examining the foundations of his edifice of *burrs*."

"The penitence imposed by the holy Father cannot be the repentance required by Christ: for what the holy Father imposes he can dispense with; and if these two penitences are one and the

same thing, it follows that the holy Father takes away what Christ imposes, and destroys the commandment of God . . . Let him only ill treat *me*," continues Luther, after having quoted other false interpretations of Tetzel, "let him call me a heretic; schismatical, slanderous, and whatever he pleases; I shall not be his enemy on that account;—nay, so far from it, I will, on that account, pray for him as for a friend. But it cannot be endured that he should treat the Holy Scripture, our consolation, as a sow treats a sack of oats."*

We must accustom ourselves to find Luther sometimes using expressions too coarsely vituperative for modern taste: it was the custom of the time; and we generally find in those words which shock our notions of propriety in language, a suitableness and strength which redeem their harshness. He continues:

"He who purchases indulgences," say our adversaries again, "does better than he who gives alms to a poor man, unless he be reduced to the greatest extremity. Now, if they tell us that the Turks are profaning our churches and crosses, we may hear it without shuddering, for we have amongst ourselves Turks a hundred times worse, who profane and annihilate the only true sanctuary, the word of God, which sanctifies all things. . . . Let him who wishes to follow this precept, take good care not to feed the hungry, or to clothe the naked, before they die of want, and consequently have no more need of assistance."

* Das er die Schrift, unsern Trost, nicht anders behandelt wie die Sau einen Habersack.

It is important to compare Luther's zeal for good works, with what he says about justification by faith. Indeed, no one who has any experience and knowledge of Christianity, wants this new proof of a truth of which he has felt the fullest evidence; namely, that the more firmly we hold the doctrine of justification by faith, the better we know the necessity of works, and the more diligent are we in the practice of them; whilst on the other hand, any laxity of the doctrine of faith, brings with it, of necessity, a neglect of good works. Luther, St. Paul before him, and Howard after him, are proofs of the former assertion. All men without this faith,—and the world is full of such,—give proof of the latter.

Luther proceeds to refer to the insults of Tetzel, and returns them in his fashion: "It seems to me, at the sound of these invectives, that I hear a great ass braying at me. I rejoice at it, and should be very sorry that such people should call me a good christian." ... We must represent Luther such as he was, and with all his weaknesses. This inclination to humour, and even low humour, was one of them. He was a great man, a man of God; but he was a man, and not an angel, nor even a perfect man. Who has the right to require this in him?

"Furthermore," adds he, defying and challenging his adversaries to the combat, "although for such things it is not the custom to burn heretics, here am I, at Wittemberg, I, Doctor Martin Luther! and if there is any inquisitor who wishes to chew iron, or blow up rocks, I give him notice that he may have a safe-conduct hither, open gates, a good

table, and a lodging prepared for him, all through the gracious care of the worthy prince, Duke Frederic, Elector of Saxony, who will never be the protector of heretics."*

We see that Luther was not wanting in courage. He trusted in the word of God, and that is a rock that never fails to shelter us in the storm. But God in his faithfulness also afforded him other assistance. To the bursts of joy with which the multitude received the theses of Luther, had succeeded a mournful silence. The learned had timidly withdrawn when they heard the calumnies and insults of Tetzel and of the Dominicans. The bishops, who had before loudly blamed the abuse of the indulgences, seeing them at last attacked, had not failed, as is always the case, to discover that the attack was unseasonable. The greater part of the Reformer's friends were alarmed. Every one shrunk back. But when the first alarm was over, a change took place in the minds of men. The monk of Wittemberg, who, for some time, had been almost alone in the Church, soon saw himself again surrounded by a multitude of friends and admirers.

There was one, who, though timid, still remained faithful to him at this crisis, and whose friendship was a consolation and support. This was Spalatin. Their correspondence had been kept up. "I return you thanks," he says to him, speaking of a special mark of friendship he had received from him, "but what do I not owe you?"† It was on the 11th of November, 1517, eleven days after the pub-

* L. Opp. Leips. xvii. 132.

† Tibi gratias ago: imò quid tibi non debeo? (L. Epp. i. p. 74.)

lication of the theses, and consequently at the moment when the minds of the people were in the greatest ferment, that Luther thus poured forth his gratitude to his friend. It is interesting to see in this very letter to Spalatin, how this strong man, who had just performed an action requiring so much courage, acknowledges whence his strength is derived. "We can do nothing of ourselves; we can do all things by the grace of God. Ignorance in any measure is altogether beyond our power to overcome. There is no ignorance so dark but the grace of God can dispel it. The more we labour by our own strength to attain wisdom, the more infatuated we become.* And it is not true that this invincible ignorance excuses the sinner, for otherwise there is no such thing as sin in the world."

Luther had sent his propositions neither to the prince nor to any of his courtiers. It appears that the chaplain expressed some surprise at this. "I did not wish," answered Luther, "that my theses should reach the hands of our illustrious prince, or any of his circle, before those who think they are therein referred to had received them, lest they should suppose that I published them by the prince's direction, or to court his favour, and out of ill-will to the Bishop of Mentz. I am told there are several who fancy this;—but now I can safely affirm, that my theses were published without the privity of Duke Frederic."†

* Quanto magis conamur ex nobis ad sapientiam, tanto amplius appropinquamus insipientiæ. (L. Epp. i. p. 74.)

† Sed salvum est nunc etiam jurare, quod sine scitu ducis Frederici exierint. (Ibid. p. 76.)

If Spalatin comforted his friend, and supported him with all his influence, Luther, on his part, endeavoured to answer all the enquiries addressed to him by the diffident chaplain. Among his questions was one which is often proposed in our days. "What," asked he, "is the best method of studying the Scriptures?"

"Hitherto," answered Luther, "worthy Spalatin, you have asked only things I was able to answer. But to guide you in the study of the Holy Scripture is beyond my strength. However, if you insist on knowing my method, I will not conceal it from you.

"It is most plain we cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture either by study or by strength of intellect. Therefore your first duty must be to begin with prayer.* Entreat the Lord to deign to grant you, in his rich mercy, rightly to understand his word. There is no other interpreter of the word of God but the author of that word himself; even as He has said, 'They shall all be taught of God.' Hope nothing from your study, or the strength of your intellect; but simply put your trust in God, and in the guidance of his Spirit. Believe one who has made trial of this method."† Here we see how Luther attained to the possession of the truth which he preached to others. It was not, as

* Primum id certissimum est, sacras litteras non posse vel studio, vel ingenio penetrari. Ideò primum officium est ut ab oratione incipias.

† Igitur de tuo studio desperes oportet omninò, simul et ingenio. Deo autem soli confidas et influxui spiritûs. Experto crede ista. (L. Epp. i. p. 88. 18 Jan.)

some have said, by following the guidance of his own presumptuous reason; nor was it, as others assert, by surrendering himself to the contentious passions. He drew from the purest and holiest spring, by humble, trusting, and prayerful enquiry of God himself. But then, there are few men of this age who follow his example; and hence it is that there are few who understand him. To a thoughtful mind these words of Luther are of themselves a justification of the Reformation.

Luther also found consolation in the friendship of respectable laymen. Christopher Scheurl, the worthy town-clerk of the imperial city of Nuremberg, at this time afforded him some affecting marks of his regard.* How sweet to the heart of a man encompassed with adversaries is every intimation of interest felt in his success! The town-clerk of Nuremberg went further; he wished to bring over other friends to the man he himself befriended. He proposed to him that he should dedicate one of his writings to Jerome Ebner, a jurisconsult of Nuremberg, who was then in great repute. "You have a high notion of my labours," answered Luther modestly; "but I myself have a very poor opinion of them. It was my wish, however, to comply with your desire. I looked,—but amongst all my papers, which I never before thought so meanly of, I could find nothing but what seemed totally unworthy of being dedicated to so distinguished a person by so humble an individual as myself." Touching hu-

* "Literæ tuæ," wrote Luther to him, on the 11th of December, 1517, "animum tuum erga meam parvitatem candidum et longè ultra merita benevolentissimum probaverunt." (L. Epp. i. p. 79.)

mility! The words are those of Luther,—and he is speaking of the comparatively unknown name of Doctor Ebner! Posterity has not ratified his estimate.

Luther, who made no attempt to circulate his theses, had not only abstained from sending them to the Elector and his court, but had not even sent them to Scheurl. The town-clerk of Nuremberg expressed some surprise at this. "My design," answered Luther, "was not to make them so public. I wished to discuss the various points comprised in them with some of our associates and neighbours.* If they had condemned them, I would have destroyed them; if they had approved them, I would have published them. But now they have been printed again and again, and circulated so far beyond all my expectations, that I regret the production of them;† not that I fear the truth being made known to the people, for that is my object; but they are not in the best form for general instruction. They contain some points, too, which are still questionable in my own judgment. And if I had thought they would have made such an impression, there are propositions that I would have left out, and others that I would have asserted with greater confidence." Luther afterwards thought differently. Far from fearing that he had said too much, he declared he ought to have spoken out much more fully. But the apprehensions that Luther evinced

* Non fuit consilium neque votum eas evulgari, sed cum paucis apud et circum nos habitantibus primùm super ipsis conferri. (L. Epp. i. p. 95.)

† Ut me pœniteat hujus fœturæ. (Ibid.)

to Scheurl do honour to his sincerity. They shew that he had no preconceived plan, or party purpose; that he was free from self-conceit, and was seeking the truth alone. When he had discovered it in its fulness, his language was changed. "You will find in my earlier writings," said he, many years afterwards, "that I very humbly conceded to the Pope many and important things which I now abhor and regard as abominable and blasphemous."*

Scheurl was not the only layman of consideration who then manifested a friendly disposition towards Luther. The famous painter, Albert Durer, sent him a present, probably one of his productions, and the Doctor expressed his gratitude for the gift.†

Thus Luther, at that time, experienced in his own person the truth of the divine word: "A friend loveth at all times; and a brother is born for adversity." But he recalled the passage for comfort to others as well as to himself.

He pleaded for the entire nation. The Elector had just levied a tax, and it was affirmed that he was about to levy another, in accordance, probably, with the advice of Pfeffinger, his counsellor, whose conduct was often the subject of Luther's strictures. The Doctor boldly placed himself in the breach. "Let not your Highness," said he, "despise the prayer of a poor friar. I beseech you, in God's name, not to impose any further tax. I was heart-broken,—and so were many of those who are most

* Quæ istis temporibus pro summâ blasphemiâ et abominatione habeo et execror. (L. Opp. Lat. Witt. in præf.)

† Accepi .... simul et donum insignis viri Alberti Durer. (L. Epp. i. p. 95.)

devoted to you,—at seeing to what a degree the last had injured your Highness's fair name and popularity. It is true that God has endowed you with a lofty judgment, so that you see further into the consequences of these things than I or your subjects in general. But it may be the will of God that a meaner capacity shall minister instruction to a greater,—to the end that no one may trust in himself, but simply in the Lord our God. May he deign, for our good, to preserve your body in health, and your soul for everlasting blessedness. Amen." Thus the Gospel, while it honours kings, pleads the cause of the people. It instructs subjects in their duties, and it calls upon princes to be regardful of their subjects' rights. The voice of such a christian man as Luther, speaking in the secret chamber of a sovereign, may often do more than can be effected by a whole assembly of legislators.

In this same letter, in which Luther inculcated a stern lesson to his prince, he was not afraid to ask a boon of him, or rather, to remind him of a promise,—the promise he had made him of a new gown. This freedom on Luther's part, at a moment when he might fear he had offended Frederic, is equally honourable to the Prince and the Reformer. "But if," said he, "Pfeffinger has the charge of these matters, let him give it me in reality, and not in protestations of friendship. For as to weaving fine words together, it is what he excels in; but no good cloth comes of that." Luther thought that by his faithful counsels he had fairly earned his court garment.* However, two years

* Mein Hofkleid verdienen. (Epp. L. i. 77, 78.)

after he had not received it, and his solicitation was renewed.* A fact which seems to shew that Frederic was not so easily wrought upon by Luther as has been supposed.

The minds of men had gradually recovered from the alarm that had at first been communicated to them. Luther himself was inclined to declare that his words did not bear the construction that had been put upon them. New events might have diverted public attention; and the blow aimed against the Romish doctrine might have spent itself in the air, as had often been the case before. But the partisans of Rome prevented the affair from ending thus. They fanned the flame instead of extinguishing it.

Tetzel and the Dominicans haughtily replied to the attack made upon them. Eager to crush the audacious monk who had disturbed their traffic, and to conciliate the favour of the Roman Pontiff, they raised a shout of indignation,—affirmed that to attack the indulgences established by the Pope, was to attack the Pope himself; and summoned to their assistance, all the monks and divines of their school.† It is evident, indeed, that Tetzel was conscious of his own inability to cope with such an adversary as Luther. Quite disconcerted by the Doctor's attack, and irritated in the highest degree, he quitted the neighbourhood of Wittemberg, and went to Frankfort on the Oder, where he arrived in November, 1517. Conrad Wimpina, a man of great

* Epp. L. i. p. 293.

† Suum senatum convocat; monachos aliquot et theologos suâ sophisticâ utcumque tinctos. (Melancth. Vita Luth. 106.)

eloquence, and one of the most distinguished divines of the time was one of the professors in the university of that city. Wimpina regarded with a jealous eye, both the Doctor of Wittemberg, and the university to which he belonged. The reputation enjoyed by both gave him umbrage. Tetzel requested him to answer the theses of Luther, and Wimpina accordingly wrote two series of antitheses, the first in defence of the doctrine of indulgences, and the second of the Papal authority.

On the 20th January, 1518, took place that disputation which had been so long preparing, which had been announced so ostentatiously, and on which Tetzel built his hopes. Loudly had he beat to arms. Monks had been gathering together from all the neighbouring cloisters. More than three hundred were now assembled. Tetzel read to them his theses. In these he repeated all that he had advanced before, even the declaration that—"Whosoever shall say the soul does not take its flight from purgatory, immediately that the money is dropped into the chest is in error."*

But above all, he put forward propositions by which the Pope seemed actually "seated," as the apostle expresses it, "in the temple of God, shewing himself to be God." This shameless dealer in counterfeit wares found it convenient to retreat with all his disorders and scandals under the cover of the Pope's mantle.

The following are positions which he declared

* Quisquis ergo dicet, non citius posse animam volare quam in fundo cistæ denarius possit tinnire, errat.—(Positiones fratris Joh. Tezelii, Pos. 56. L. Opp. i. p. 94.)

himself ready to defend, in presence of the numerous assembly that surrounded him:

"3. Christians should be taught, that the Pope, in the plenitude of his power, is higher than the universal church and superior to councils; and that entire submission is due to his decrees.

"4. Christians should be taught, that the Pope alone has the right to decide in questions of Christian doctrine;—that he alone, and no other, has power to explain, according to his judgment, the sense of Holy Scripture, and to approve or condemn the words and works of others.

"5. Christians should be taught, that the judgment of the Pope, in things pertaining to Christian doctrine, and necessary to the salvation of mankind, can in no case err.

"6. Christians should be taught, that they should place more dependance in matters of faith on the Pope's judgment, expressed in his decrees, than of the unanimous opinion of all the learned, resting merely upon their interpretation of Scripture.

"8. Christians should be taught, that they who conspire against the honour or dignity of the Pope incur the guilt of treason, and deserve to be accursed.

"17. Christians should be taught, that there are many things which the Church regards as certain articles of the Catholic faith, although they are not found either in the inspired Scriptures or in the early Fathers.

"44. Christians should be taught to regard, as obstinate heretics, all who, by speech, action, or writing, declare that they would not retract their

heretical propositions, though excommunication after excommunication should be showered upon them like hail.

"48. Christians should be taught, that they who protect the errors of heretics, and who, by their authority, hinder them from being brought before the judge who has a right to hear them, are excommunicate;—and that if, within the space of one year, they cease not from doing so, they will be declared infamous, and severely visited with punishment, conformable to the provisions of the law, and for the warning of others.*

"50. Christians should be taught, that they who scribble so many books and tracts,—who preach, or publicly, and with evil intention, dispute about the confession of the lips, the satisfaction of works, the rich and large indulgences of the Bishop of Rome and his power; they who side with those who preach or write such things, and take pleasure in their writings, and circulate them among the people and in society; and finally, all they, who, in secret, speak of these things with contempt or irreverence, must expect to fall under the penalties before recited, and to plunge themselves, and others along with them, into eternal condemnation at the great day, and the deepest disgrace in this present world. For every beast that toucheth the mountain shall be stoned."

We perceive that Luther was not the only object of Tetzel's attack. In his 48th thesis he probably

* Pro infamibus sunt tenendi, qui etiam per juris capitula terribiliter multis plectectur pœnis in omnium hominum terrorem. (Positiones fratris Joh. Tezelii. 56. L. Opp. i. p. 98.)

had an eye to the Elector of Saxony. In other respects these propositions savour strongly of the Dominican. To threaten all opposition with rigorous chastisements, was an inquisitor's argument, which there was no way of answering. The three hundred monks, whom Tetzel had assembled, were full of admiration of all that he had said. The divines of the university were too fearful of being classed among the promoters of heresy, and too much attached to the principles of Wimpina, openly to attack the astounding theses which had been read in their presence.

This affair, therefore, about which there had been so much noise, seemed likely to end like a mock fight; but among the crowd of students present at the discussion was a young man, about twenty years of age, named John Knipstrow. He had read the theses of Luther, and found them agreeable to the Scriptures. Indignant at seeing the truth publicly trampled under foot, without any one offering himself in its defence, the young man raised his voice, to the great surprise of the whole assembly, and attacked the presumptuous Tetzel. The poor Dominican, who had not reckoned on any such opposition, was thrown into dismay. After some attempts at an answer, he abandoned the field of battle, and made room for Wimpina. The latter defended his cause with more vigour; but Knipstrow pressed him so hard that, to put an end to the untoward contest, Wimpina, in his capacity of president, declared the discussion terminated, and proceeded at once to the promoting of Tetzel to the rank of Doctor, as the recompense of this glorious

dispute. After this, Wimpina, to get rid of his young antagonist, caused him to be sent to the convent of Pyritz, in Pomerania, with directions that he should be strictly watched. But this newly-risen luminary, removed from the banks of the Oder, was destined, at a later period, to diffuse the light over Pomerania.* God, when he sees fit, employs the disciple to confound the master.

Tetzel, desirous to make up for the check he had met with, had recourse to the *ultima ratio* of Rome and its inquisitors,—the fire. He set up a pulpit and a scaffold in one of the suburbs of Frankfort. He went thither in solemn procession, arrayed in the insignia of an inquisitor of the faith. He inveighed, in his most furious manner, from the pulpit. He hurled his thunders with an unsparing hand, and loudly exclaimed, that "the heretic Luther ought to be burned alive." Then, placing the Doctor's propositions and sermon on the scaffold, he set fire to them.† He shewed greater dexterity in this operation than he had displayed in defending his theses. Here there was none to oppose him, and his victory was complete. The arrogant Dominican re-entered Frankfort in triumph. When parties accustomed to power have sustained defeat, they have recourse to certain shows and semblances, which must be allowed them as a consolation for their disgrace.

* Spicker, Gesch. Dr. M. Luthers.—Beckmanni Notitia univ. Francofurt. 8, &c.

† Fulmina in Lutherum torquet: vociferatur ubique hunc hæreticum igni perdendum esse; propositiones etiam Lutheri et concionem de indulgentiis publicè conjicit in flammas. (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

The second theses of Tetzel mark an important epoch in the Reformation. They changed the ground of the dispute, transferring it from the indulgence-market to the halls of the Vatican,—and diverted the attack from Tetzel, to direct it against the Pope. For the contemptible trafficker whom Luther had assailed and held powerless in his grasp, they substituted the sacred person of the Head of the Church. Luther was all astonishment at this. A little later, probably, he would, of his own accord, have taken up this new position; but his enemies spared him the trouble. Thenceforward, the dispute had reference, not merely to a discredited traffic, but to Rome itself; and the blow, that a bold hand had aimed against Tetzel's stall, smote, and shook to its foundation, the throne of the pontifical king.

The theses of Tetzel served, moreover, only as a signal to the troop of Romish doctors. A shout was raised against Luther by the monks, enraged at the appearance of an adversary more formidable even than Erasmus or Reuchlin. The name of Luther resounded from all the Dominican pulpits. They stirred up the passions of the people; they called the intrepid Doctor, a madman, a seducer, a wretch possessed by the devil. His teaching was decried as the most horrible of heresies. "Only wait," said they, "a fortnight, or, at most, a month, and that notorious heretic will be burned alive." Had it depended on the Dominicans, indeed, the Saxon Doctor would soon have met the fate of Huss and of Jerome; but God was watching over him. His life was destined to accomplish what the martyrdom

of Huss had begun. For each individual serves the purposes of God; one by his life, another by his death. Already many exclaimed that the whole university of Wittemberg was tainted with heresy, and they pronounced it infamous.* "Let us drive out the wretch and all his partisans," said they. And in many cases these clamours did, in fact, excite the passions of the people. Those who shared in the opinions of the Reformer were pointed out to public observation, and wherever the monks had power in their hands, the friends of the Gospel felt the effects of their hatred. Thus the prophecy of our Saviour began to be fulfilled: "They shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." This recompense of the world is in no age withheld from the decided disciples of the Gospel.

When Luther heard of the theses of Tetzel and of the general attack of which they had given the signal, his courage rose. He saw that it was necessary to face such adversaries boldly; his intrepid spirit felt no difficulty in resolving to do so. But, at the same time, their weakness discovered to him his own strength, and inspired him with the consciousness of what in reality he was.

He did not, however, give way to those emotions of pride which are so congenial to man's heart. "I have more difficulty," wrote he to Spalatin, at this time, "to refrain from despising my adversaries, and so sinning against Christ, than I should have in vanquishing them. They are so ignorant, both of

* Eò furunt usque ut universitatem Wittembergensem propter me infamem conantur facere et hæreticam. (L. Epp. i. p. 92.)

human and divine things, that it is humbling to have to dispute with them; and yet it is this very ignorance which gives them their inconceivable boldness and their brazen front."* But what, above all, strengthened his heart, in the midst of this general hostility, was the deep conviction that his cause was the cause of truth. "Do not wonder," he wrote to Spalatin, in the beginning of 1518, "that they revile me so unsparingly. I hear their revilings with joy. If they did not curse me, we could not be so firmly assured that the cause I have undertaken is that of God himself.† Christ was set for a sign that should be spoken against." "I know," said he, another time, "that from the beginning the Word of God has been such as that whosoever would carry it into the world, must, like the apostles, leave everything, and be delivered unto death. If it were not so, it would not be the word of Christ."‡ This peace, in the midst of agitation, is a thing unknown to the heroes of the world. We see men at the head of a government,—of a political party,—sink under their labours and trials. The Christian generally gathers new strength in conflict. It is because he is acquainted with a hidden source of refreshment and courage, unknown to him whose eyes are closed against the Gospel.

One thing, however, at times disturbed Lu-

* Epp. Luth. i. p. 92.

† Nisi Maledicerer non crederem ex Deo esse quæ tracto. (L. Epp. i. p. 85.)

‡ "Morte emptum est (verbum Dei)," continues he, in deeply energetic language, "mortibus vulgatum, mortibus servatum, mortibus quoque servandum aut referendum est."

ther: it was the thought of the dissensions his courageous resistance might give rise to. He knew that a word might be enough to set the world in a flame. He at times foresaw prince opposing prince; nation, perhaps, set against nation. His love for his country took alarm; his Christian charity recoiled from the prospect. He would gladly have secured peace; yet it behoved him to speak. It was the Lord's will. "I tremble," said he,—"I shudder—at the thought that I may be an occasion of discord to such mighty princes."*

He still kept silence in regard to Tetzel's propositions concerning the Pope; had he been carried away by passion, doubtless he would have fallen with impetuosity upon that astounding doctrine, under which his adversary sought shelter and concealment for himself. But he did nothing of the kind. There is in his delay, reserve, and silence, a something grave and solemn, which sufficiently reveals the spirit that animated him. He paused, yet not from weakness,—for the blow was but the heavier, when at length it fell.

Tetzel, after his auto-da-fé at Frankfort on the Oder, had hastened to send his theses into Saxony. They will serve, thought he, as an antidote to those of Luther. A man was despatched by the inquisitor from Alle to distribute his propositions at Wittemberg. The students of that university, indignant that Tetzel should have burned the theses of their master, no sooner heard of the arrival of his messenger than they surrounded him in troops

* Inter tantos principes dissidii origo esse valde horreo et timeo. (L. Epp. i. p. 93.)

inquiring in threatening tones how he had dared to bring such things thither. Some of them purchased a portion of the copies he had brought with him; others seized on the remainder; thus getting possession of his whole stock, which amounted to eight hundred copies; then unknown* to the Elector, the senate, the rector, Luther, and all the professors, the students of Wittemberg posted bills on the gates of the university, bearing these words: "Whosoever desires to be present at the burning and obsequies of the theses of Tetzel, let him repair at two o'clock to the market place."

They assembled in crowds at the hour appointed; and, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, committed the propositions of the Dominican to the flames. One copy was saved from the fire. Luther afterwards sent it to his friend Lange, of Erfurth. The young students acted on the precept of them of old time, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and not on that of Christ. But when doctors and professors had set such an example at Frankfort, can we wonder that young students should follow it at Wittemberg? The report of this academic execution spread through Germany, and made much noise.† Luther was deeply grieved at it.

"I am surprised," wrote he, to his old master, Jodocus, at Erfurth, "that you could think I had anything to do with the burning of Tetzel's theses. Do you think I have utterly lost my senses? But what can I do? When the tale is told of me,

* Hæc inscio principe, senatu, rectore, denique omnibus nobis. (L. Epp. i. p. 99.)

† Fit ex ea re ingens undique fabula. (Ibid.)

any thing, and from every quarter, gains implicit belief.* Can I tie up men's tongues? No matter! let them tell, and hear, and see, and report whatever they please. I will go on as long as the Lord shall give me strength; and, with God's help, I will fear nothing."—"What will come of it," said he to Lange, "I know not; this only I know, that the peril in which I stand is greatly enhanced by the act."† This occurrence shows how the hearts of the young were already kindled in the cause of which Luther was the champion. It was a sign of high import; for a movement once begun among the young is necessarily soon communicated to the entire generation.

The theses of Tetzel and of Wimpina, though slightly esteemed, produced a certain effect. They opened out the questions in dispute; they enlarged the rent in the mantle of the church; they brought new questions of thrilling interest into the field of controversy. Consequently, the heads of the Church began to take a nearer view of the debate, and to declare themselves strongly against the Reformer. "I know not, truly, on whose protection Luther can rely, said the Bishop of Brandenburg, "that he ventures in this way to attack the authority of the bishops." Perceiving that this new conjuncture called for new precautions, the Bishop came himself to Wittemberg. But he found Luther animated by that inward joy which springs from a good conscience, and determined to give battle. The Bishop felt that the monk was obeying a power higher

* Omnes omnibus omnia credunt de me. (L. Epp. i. p. 99.)

† L. Epp. i. p. 98.

than his own, and returned in an angry mood to Brandenburg. One day, (before the close of the winter of 1518), while seated at his fireside, he said, turning to those who surrounded him, "I will not lay my head down in peace until I have cast Martin into the fire like this faggot;" and as he spoke he cast the faggot on the blazing hearth. The revolution of the sixteenth century was to be no more indebted for support to the heads of the Church than that of the first century had been to the sanhedrim and the synagogue. The dignified priesthood was again, in the sixteenth century, opposed to Luther, the Reformation, and its ministers, as it had formerly been to Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and his Apostles, and as it too often is, in all periods, to the truth. "The Bishops," said Luther, speaking of the visit of the prelate of Brandenburg, "begin to see that they should have done what I am doing, and they are ashamed. They call me arrogant and audacious; and I do not deny that I am so. But they are not the people to know either what God is, or what we are."*

A more formidable resistance than that which Tetzel had offered had now sprung up against Luther. Rome had answered him. A reply had gone forth from the walls of the sacred palace. It was not Leo X., however, who condescended to meddle with theology. "A squabble among the monks!" said he: "the best way is to take no notice of it." And on another occasion he observed: "It is a drunken German† that has written these theses;

* Quid vel Deus vel ipsi sumus. (L. Epp. i. 224.)

† Ein voller trunkener Deutscher. (L. Opp. (W.) xxii. 1337.)

when he is sober he will talk very differently." A Dominican of Rome, Sylvester Prierias, master of the pontifical palace, filled the office of censor. In that capacity he was the first to take cognizance of the theses published by the Saxon monk.

A Roman censor, and the theses of Luther! how remarkable the encounter! Freedom of speech, freedom of enquiry, and freedom of religious belief, had now to maintain a conflict, within the very gates of Rome, against the power that claims to hold in its hands the monopoly of spiritual knowledge, and at its own will to suppress the voice of christian truth or allow it utterance. The struggle between that christian liberty which stamps men the children of God, and that pontifical despotism which makes them the slaves of Rome, is symbolized, as it were, in the very beginning of the Reformation, by the encounter of Luther and Prierias.

This Roman censor, this prior-general of the Dominicans, this dignitary, whose office empowered him to determine what doctrines christian men should profess, and on what points they should be silent, was eager to reply. He published a writing which he dedicated to Leo X., and in which he spoke contemptuously of the German monk, and declared, with an assurance altogether Roman, that he should like to know whether that Martin had indeed an iron snout and a head of brass, which it was impossible to shatter.* Then, under the form of a dialogue, he proceeded to attack Luther's theses, employing by turns ridicule, reviling, and threats.

* An ferreum nasum aut caput æneum gerat iste Lutherus, ut effringi non possit. (Sylv. Prieratis Dialogus.)

This contest, between the Augustine of Wittemberg and the Dominican of Rome, was waged on the question which is in itself the principle of the Reformation; namely, what is the sole infallible authority for Christians? Take the system of the Church, as set forth by its most independent organs.*

The letter of the written word is dead, without that spirit of interpretation, which alone reveals its hidden meaning. But this spirit is not given to every Christian, but to the Church, that is, to the priests. It is great presumption to affirm that He, who promised to the Church to be with her always even to the end of the world, could have abandoned her to the power of error. It will be said, perhaps, that the doctrine and constitution of the Church are not now such as we find them in the Holy Scriptures. Undoubtedly; but this change is only apparent, it extends only to the form and not to the substance. Nay, more,—this change is a progression. The life-giving power of the Divine Spirit has imparted reality to what, in Scripture, existed only in idea. To the outline of the word it has given a body, put a finishing touch to its rough draught, and completed the work of which the Bible had merely furnished the rudiments. Consequently, we must understand the meaning of Holy Scripture, as it has been determined by the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.—So far the Catholic doctors were agreed: at this point they were divided,—General Councils, said some (and

* See "Joh. Gersonis Propositiones de sensu litterali S. Scripturæ." (Opp. tom. i.)

Gerson was of their number), are the representatives of the Church. Others said, it is the Pope who is the depositary of the spirit of interpretation; and no one has the right to construe Scripture otherwise than in accordance with the decree of the Roman Pontiff. This was the tenet espoused by Prierias.

Such was the doctrine which the master of the palace opposed to the infancy of the Reformation. He advanced assertions, with respect to the power of the Church and of the Pope to which the most shameless flatterers of the court of Rome would have blushed to subscribe. The following is one of the principles laid down at the commencement of his writing: "Whosoever does not rely on the teaching of the Roman Church, and of the Roman Pontiff, as the infallible rule of faith, and as that from which Holy Scripture itself derives its obligation and authority, is an heretic."*

Then follows a dialogue in which the speakers are Luther and Sylvester, and in which the latter labours to refute the Doctor's propositions. The sentiments of the Saxon monk were altogether new and strange to a Roman censor; hence Prierias shewed that he understood neither the feelings of his heart nor the principles that regulated his conduct. He estimated the teacher of the truth by the petty standard of the retainers of the Papacy. "My good Luther," says he, "were it thy fortune to receive from our Lord the Pope a good bishoprick and a plenary indulgence for the rebuilding of thy church,

* A quâ etiam Sacra Scriptura, robur trahit et auctoritatem, hæreticus est. (Fundamentum tertium.)

how would thy tone be altered, and how loudly wouldst thou extol the indulgence which it now delights thee to disparage!" With all his pretensions to refinement, this Italian has frequent recourse to the grossest scurrility of language. "If it is the nature of dogs to bite," says he to Luther, "I should fear thou hadst a dog for thy father."* Toward the close of his work, the Dominican even marvels at his own condescension, in parleying thus with a mutinous monk; and in taking leave of his adversary, he shows him the cruel teeth of an inquisitor. "The Roman Church," says he, "the supremacy of whose power, spiritual and temporal, is vested in the Pope, can restrain, by the secular arm, those who, having first received the faith, afterwards depart from it. The Church is under no obligation to employ argument to combat and overcome rebels."† Such words, proceeding from the pen of a dignitary of the Roman court, were deeply significant; yet they did not intimidate Luther; he believed, or affected to believe, that this dialogue was not written by Prierias, but by Ulric de Hütten, or some other contributor to the *Litteræ Obscurorum Virorum*. "One of that fraternity," said he, "from the mere love of satire, or to set Luther against Prierias, has collected together this mass of absurdity."‡ However, after having

* Si mordere canum est proprium, vereor ne tibi pater canis fuerit. (Sylv. Prier. Dial.)

† Seculari brachio potest eos compescere, nec tenetur rationibus certare ad vincendos protervientes. (Ibid.)

‡ Convenit inter nos esse personatum aliquem Sylvestrem ex obscuris viris, qui tantas ineptias in hominem luserit ad provocandum me adversus eum. (Epp. i. p. 87, 14 Jan.)

for some time kept silence, his doubts, if he had any, were removed; he set to work, and in two days prepared his answer.*

The Bible had decided Luther's destiny: it had moulded the Reformer and commenced the Reformation. Luther's belief depended not on the testimony of the Church. His faith had come from the Bible itself: from within, and not from without. He was so deeply convinced that the evangelic doctrine was immoveably built upon the word of God, that all external doctrine was to him superfluous. This experimental knowledge possessed by Luther opened to the Church a new futurity. The living spring, which had gushed forth for the refreshment of the monk of Wittemberg, was to become a mighty river that should slake the thirst of nations.

"To understand Scripture, it is necessary that the Spirit of God should open the understanding," said the Church, and thus far it said truly. But its error lay in considering the Holy Spirit as the exclusive privilege of a particular caste, and supposing that he could be pent up in assemblies and colleges, in a city, or a conclave. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," said the Son of God, when speaking of the Spirit of God,—and elsewhere: "They shall be *all* taught of God." The corruption of the Church, the ambition of the Pontiffs, the passions of Councils, the animosities of the clergy, the pomp of the prelates, had banished far from those priestly abodes that Holy Spirit—that Spirit of humility and of peace. The Spirit of God had departed from the assemblies of the proud, and the palaces of princes of the Church, and had

* T. i. Witt. Lat. p. 170.

tabernacled with simple Christians and humble priests. He had turned from a tyrannous hierarchy, whose bloody heel again and again had trampled on the poor,—from a proud and ignorant clergy, whose leaders were better skilled in the use of the sword than of the Bible,—and was present with despised sectaries, or with men of understanding and learning. The holy cloud, that had withdrawn itself from the stately temple and the proud cathedral, had descended on the secluded dwellings of the humble, or the tranquil chamber of the conscientious enquirer. The Church, debased by her love of power and lucre, dishonoured before the people, by her venal perversion of the doctrine of life,—the Church, busy in selling salvation, that she might replenish a treasury exhausted by her pride and debaucheries,—had forfeited all respect; and men of sense no longer attached any value to her testimony. Despising an authority so degraded, they gladly turned toward the divine word and its infallible authority as the only refuge open to them in that universal confusion.

The age therefore was ripe. The bold movement by which Luther shifted the support of the highest hopes of man's heart,—loosening them with a strong hand from the walls of the Vatican to fix them on the rock of the word of God, was hailed with enthusiasm. This was the object the Reformer had in view in his answer to Prierias.

Passing by the principles the Dominican had laid down at the opening of his work—"I," said he, "following your example, will also lay down certain principles."

The first is this passage of St. Paul:—"If any one preach unto you another Gospel than that is preached, though he should be an angel from heaven, let him be accursed."

The second is the following, from St. Augustine writing to St. Jerome:—"I have learned to render to the inspired Scriptures alone the homage of a firm belief, that they have never erred; as to others, I do not believe in the things they teach, simply because it is they who teach them."

Here Luther, with a steady hand, establishes the fundamental principles of the Reformation. The word of God,—the whole word of God,—and nothing but the word of God. "If you rightly understand these principles," continues he, "you will also understand that your whole Dialogue is overturned by them; for you have done nothing but bring forward phrases and opinions of St. Thomas." Then, openly impugning the axioms of his adversary, he freely confesses that he thinks both Popes and Councils may err. He complains of the flatteries of the Roman courtiers, who ascribe this and that power to the Pope. He declares that the Church exists virtually in Christ alone, and representatively in a General Council.* And then, alluding to the insinuation of Prierias: "Undoubtedly you judge me by yourself," said he; "but if I aspired to be made a bishop I certainly should not use the language which you find so offensive. Do you imagine I am ignorant of the manner in which bishoprics and priest's orders are obtained at Rome? Do not the very children

* Ego ecclesiam virtualiter non scio nisi in Christo, representativè non nisi in concilio. (L. Opp. lat. p. 174.)

sing, in every street of that city, these well known words:—

"Of all foul spots the wide world round,
The foulest here, in Rome, is found?"*

(Such songs had been current in Rome before the election of one of the last Popes.) Yet Luther speaks of Leo with respect. "I know," says he, "that he may be compared to Daniel in Babylon; his innocence has often endangered his life." He concludes by replying very briefly to the threatening language used by Prierias. "Lastly, you say that the Pope is both pontiff and emperor, and that he can employ the secular arm to compel obedience. Do you thirst for blood then? I protest to you that these rhodomontades and menaces of yours give me not the slightest alarm. For what if I were to lose my life? Christ still lives; Christ my Lord, and the Lord of all, blessed for ever. Amen."

Thus fearlessly did Luther, in opposition to the infidel altar of the Papacy, set up the altar of the holy and infallible word of God; an altar, before which he would have every knee to bow, and on which he declares himself ready to offer up his life.

A new adversary now presented himself in the lists,—a Dominican, like his predecessors. James Hochstraten, the inquisitor of Cologne, of whose outcries against Reuchlin, and the friends of literature, we have already spoken, could not restrain his rage when he heard of the first efforts of the hero of the Reformation. It was not to be wondered at, that monkish ignorance and fanaticism should assail the

* Quando hanc pueri in omnibus plateis urbis cantant: Denique nunc facta est fœdissima Roma. (Ibid. p. 183.)

man who was to give them the death-blow. Monachism had arisen when the primitive truth had begun to disappear. From that period monachism and error had grown up side by side. The man who was to accelerate their fall had now appeared. But his sturdy antagonists would not abandon the field. The struggle lasted to the end of Luther's life, but we regard it as epitomized in this dispute of Hochstraten and Luther; the free and courageous Christian, and the irascible slave of monkish superstitions! Hochstraten lost his temper, he gave vent to his indignation, and loudly demanded the death of the heretic. He would have had recourse to the stake to secure the triumph of Rome. "It is high treason against the Church," exclaimed he, "to suffer so horrid a heretic to live an hour longer. Away with him at once to the scaffold!" This sanguinary counsel was but too well followed in many countries, and the voices of many martyrs, as in the earlier ages of the Church, gave testimony to the truth from the midst of the flames. But in vain were fire and sword invoked against Luther. The angel of the Lord encamped around him, and defended him.

Luther answered Hochstraten in few words but with much vigour: "Out upon thee," said he, at the close of his reply, "thou senseless murderer, thirsting for the blood of thy brethren! I sincerely desire that *thou* shouldst not call me Christian and faithful; but that thou shouldst continue on the contrary to decry me as an heretic. Understand me, thou blood-thirsty man! enemy to the truth! and if thy rage prompt thee to attempt my life, take care

to act circumspectly, and to choose thy time well; God knows what is my purpose if my life should be spared. . . . My hope and expectation, God willing, shall not be disappointed."* Hochstraten made no reply.

An attack more trying to his feelings, awaited the Reformer. Doctor Eck, the celebrated professor of Ingolstadt, the deliverer of Urban Regius, the friend of Luther, had received the famous theses. Eck was not a man to defend the abuses of the indulgences; but he was a doctor of the School, not of the Bible,—well versed in the scholastic divinity, but not in the word of God. If Prierias had represented Rome, and Hochstraten the monks, the new combatant represented the schools. The scholastic philosophy, which for almost five centuries had held sway over Christendom, far from yielding to the earliest efforts of the Reformer, arose in its pride to crush the man who dared to treat it with contempt. Eck and Luther, Luther and the Schools, were often afterwards arrayed the one against the other. But it was now the contest opened.

It could hardly happen but that Eck should consider many of Luther's assertions erroneous. We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of his convictions. He was enthusiastic in defence of the scholastic opinions, whilst Luther was an equally enthusiastic adherent of the word of God. We may even imagine that Eck felt some concern at the necessity of opposing his old friend: and yet it appears, from the manner in which he assailed him,

* L. Opp. Leips. xvii. p. 140.

that passion and jealousy had some share in his motives.

It was under the title of *Obelisks* that he wrote his remarks on the theses of Luther. Desiring at first to keep up appearances, he did not publish his work, but contented himself with communicating it in confidence to his ordinary, the Bishop of Eichstadt. But the Obelisks were soon widely dispersed, either through the indiscretion of the Bishop, or by the Doctor's own act. One copy fell into the hands of Link, a preacher at Nuremberg, and a friend of Luther; by him it was communicated to Luther himself. Eck was a very different adversary from either Tetzel, Prierias, or Hochstraten: the more his work excelled theirs in learning and in subtlety, the more injurious was likely to be its effect. He spoke of "his feeble adversary" in a tone of compassion, well knowing that pity is more disparaging than anger. He insinuated that Luther's propositions were spreading the Bohemian poison, that they savoured of Bohemia, and by these malignant references, drew upon Luther the odium attaching in Germany to the name of Huss and the Bohemian schismatics.

The malice that was discernible in this writing roused Luther's indignation. But he was still more grieved at the thought that the blow came from an old friend. "It was then," thought he, "at the cost of the affection of his friends, that truth must be defended." Luther unbosomed the sadness of his heart, in a letter to Egranus, pastor at Zwickau. "In these Obelisks," said he, "I am called a 'pestilent man,' 'a Bohemian,' 'an heretic,'

and reproached as "seditious,' 'insolent,' and 'rash.' I overlook minor reproaches, such as 'dull,' 'stupid,' 'ignorant,' 'despiser of the sovereign pontiff,' &c. Throughout there are nothing but insults, and yet he who has written them is a distinguished man, in whom genius and learning are blended; moreover, one who was united to me by a great intimacy, recently contracted.* His name is John Eck, doctor of divinity, chancellor of Ingolstadt, &c. a man well known, and highly esteemed for his writings. If I did not know the design of Satan, I should wonder at the rage which has prompted Eck to violate a friendship so delightful, and so recent besides,† and that without giving me one word of notice."

But if Luther's heart was wounded, his courage was not abated. On the contrary, he caught fresh fire for the dispute. "Rejoice, brother," he said to Egranus, who had likewise been attacked by a violent adversary, "rejoice, and let not these paper missiles terrify you? The more furious my adversaries, the more I advance. I leave the things that are behind, for them to bark at, and I stretch forward to those that are before, that they may bark at those also in their turn."

Eck felt how disgraceful his conduct had been, and endeavoured to justify himself in a letter to Carlstadt. In it he termed Luther "their common friend." He threw all the blame on the Bishop of Eichstadt, at whose solicitation he declared he had

* Et quod magis urit, antea mihi magnâ recenterque contractâ amicitiâ conjunctus. (L. Epp. i. p. 100.)

† Quo furore ille amicitias recentissimas et jucundissimas solveret. (L. Epp. i. p. 100.)

written his work. He had not intended to publish the *Obelisks*, he said; if it had been otherwise he would have manifested more regard for the ties of friendship, by which he was united to Luther. Finally, he intimated a wish that, instead of engaging in a public controversy with him, Luther should turn his arms against the divines of Frankfort. The professor of Ingolstadt, who had not feared to strike the first blow, began to quail when he considered the strength of the adversary he had had the imprudence to attack. He would willingly have avoided the contest. But it was now too late.

All these fine speeches did not satisfy Luther; however, he wished to remain silent. "I will swallow patiently," he said, "this morsel, worthy of Cerberus."* But his friends were of a different opinion. They importuned him and obliged him to comply. He therefore answered Eck's *Obelisks* by his *Asterisks*, or Stars; "opposing," as he said, "the light and dazzling brightness of the stars of heaven, to the rust and livid hue of the Obelisks of the doctor of Ingolstadt." In this work he treated his new adversary with less harshness than he had used towards his former opponents; but his suppressed indignation at times broke forth in his words.

He proved that in all that chaos of Obelisks there was nothing of the *Scriptures*, nothing of the Fathers of the Church, nothing of the ecclesiastical canons; but throughout, nothing but glosses of the schools; opinions, mere opinions, and dreams;† in

* Volui tamen hanc offam Cerbero dignam absorbere patientiâ. (L. Epp. i. p. 100.)

† Omnia scholasticissima, opinisissima, meraque somnia (Ast. Opp. L. lat. i. 145.)

a word, all those very things that Luther had attacked. The *Asterisks* are full of life and energy. The author is indignant at the errors in his friend's book, but he pities the man.* He again asserts the fundamental principle that he had maintained in his answer to Prierias: "The sovereign pontiff is a man, and may be led into error; but God is truth itself, and cannot err."† And afterwards, using an argument, '*ad hominem*,' against the scholastic doctor: "It is certainly an act of audacity," says he, "for any one to teach as the philosophy of Aristotle, what he cannot prove on Aristotle's authority.—You allow this.—Well, with much greater reason is it the height of audacity, to affirm in the Church, and amongst Christians, what Christ himself has not taught.‡ Now where do we find in the Bible, that the treasure of Christ's merits is confided to the Pope?"

Lastly, he adds: "As to the malicious reproach of Bohemian heresy, I bear this accusation patiently, for Christ's sake. I live in a celebrated university, a city of note, a considerable bishoprick, a powerful duchy, where all are orthodox, and where, undoubtedly, they would not tolerate so wicked a heretic."

Luther did not publish the *Asterisks*, he only communicated them to his friends; it was not till afterwards that they were given to the public.§

* Indignor rei et misereor hominis. (Ast. Opp. L. lat. i. 150.)

† Homo est summus Pontifex, falli potest. Sed veritas est Deus, qui falli non potest. (Ibid. 155.)

‡ Longè ergo impudentissima omnium temeritas est, aliquid in ecclesiâ asserere, et inter christianos, quod non docuit Christus. (Ibid. 156.)

§ Cum privatim dederim Astericos meos, fit ei respondendi necessitas. (L. Epp. p. 126.)

This rupture between the doctor of Ingolstadt and the doctor of Wittemberg caused a great sensation in Germany. They had common friends. Scheurl, especially, took alarm. It was through him that the two doctors had become acquainted. He was one of those who wished to see a Reformation take place in the universal Germanic church, and by the agency of its most distinguished members. But if, at the outset, the most eminent theologians were to fall to quarrelling; if, whilst Luther was advancing new opinions, Eck stood up as the representative of the old, what confusion was to be apprehended? Would not numerous adherents flock around each chief, and form two hostile camps in the bosom of the empire?

On these accounts Scheurl endeavoured to reconcile Eck and Luther. The latter declared himself ready to forget everything; that he loved Eck's talents;* that he admired his learning; and that he felt more grief than anger at his old friend's conduct. "I am prepared," said he to Scheurl, "either for peace or war; but I prefer peace. Help us, then, by your good offices; grieve with us that the devil has kindled this beginning of discord among us; and afterwards rejoice that Christ in his mercy has extinguished it." He wrote affectionately to Eck, but the latter returned no answer.† He did not even send him any message. The time for a reconciliation was past. The breach grew wider and wider. The pride of Eck and his impla-

* Diligimus hominis ingenium et admiramur eruditionem. (L. Epp. ad Scheurlum, 15 Jun. 1518, i. p. 125.)

* Nihil neque literarum neque verborum me participem fecit. (Ibid.)

cable spirit soon broke the last ties of their declining friendship.

Such were the struggles which the champion of God's word had to maintain in the beginning of his career. But, in the estimation of a Christian, those combats are of small account, that are to be waged in the high places of this world, or in the arena of the schools. Human teachers imagine that they have obtained a splendid triumph if some literary circles are filled with the fame of their systems. As their desire is rather to gratify their self-love, or to please a party, than to benefit mankind, this brilliant worldly success suffices them. Thus, their labours may be compared to smoke, which, after blinding the eyes, passes away without leaving any vestige behind. Neglecting to deposit their principles in the masses, they do little more than skim the surface of society.

Not so the Christian; his aim is neither a name in society, nor academical honours; but the salvation of souls. He willingly foregoes the intellectual rivalry in which he might engage at his ease, with the disputers of this world,—and prefers the secret labours which carry light and life into the sequestered dwellings of the poor. This did Luther; or rather, following his Master's precept, "He did this, and left not other things undone." While combating inquisitors, chancellors of universities, and masters of the palace, he laboured to diffuse sound religious knowledge among the multitude. With this view, he about the same time published several popular tracts, such as his sermons on the Ten Commandments, preached two years previously in the church

of Wittemberg, and which have already been mentioned, and also his explanation of the Lord's Prayer, for the simple and unlearned laity. Who would not desire to know what the Reformer then addressed to the people?* We will cite, therefore, some of the words which he put forth to "run through the land," as he says in the preface to the last mentioned work.

Prayer, that interior act of the heart, will undoubtedly be ever one of the points with which a true and vital reformation will commence; Luther's thought was turned to this solemn subject. It is not possible to transfuse his energetic style and the vigour of his language, which was in course of formation, so to speak, under his pen, as he composed. We will however make some attempt.

"When thou prayest," said he, "let thy words be few, but thy thoughts and feelings many and deep. The less thou speakest, the better thy prayers. Few words and much thought is a Christian frame. Many words and little thought is heathenish."

"The prayer that is external and of the body is that mumbling of the lips, that outward babble, gone through without attention, and heard and seen of men; but prayer in spirit and in truth is the inward desire, the motions and sighs that proceed from the depth of the heart. The former is the prayer of hypocrites, and of those who trust in themselves. The latter is the prayer of God's children who walk in his fear."

Passing on to the opening words of the Lord's Prayer, he thus expresses himself:—*Our Father.*

* L. Opp. Leips. vii. p. 1086.

"Of all names there is not one which more inclines us towards God than the name of Father. We should feel less love, and derive less consolation, from addressing him as Lord, or God, or Judge. By that word *Father*, his bowels of compassion are moved; for there is no sound more sweet or prevailing with a father than the voice of his child."

He continues, and on the words, "*who art in heaven*," he says: "Whosoever professes that he has a father *in heaven*, acknowledges himself to be a stranger upon earth;—hence, there is in his heart an ardent longing, like that of a child that is living among strangers in want and grief, afar from its father-land. It is as if he said, Alas! my father, thou art *in heaven*, and I, thy suffering child, am *on earth*, far from thee, encompassed with dangers, wants, and mourning.

"*Hallowed be thy name.*"—"He who is passionate, abusive, envious, and slanderous, dishonours the name of God in which he has been baptized. Profaning to impious uses a vessel that God has consecrated to himself, he is like a priest who should take the holy cup and give drink to swine, or gather dung into it."

"*Thy kingdom come.*"—Those who amass property and build magnificent mansions, who strive after what the world can give, and utter this prayer with their lips, resemble those huge organ pipes which incessantly sing with all their power in the churches, without speech, feeling, or reason."

Further on, Luther attacks the error of *pilgrimages*, which was then so prevalent: "One goes to Rome, another to St. James, a third builds

a chapel, and a fourth endows religious houses, in order to attain to the kingdom of God; but all neglect the one thing needful, which is, to become *themselves* his kingdom! Why seek the kingdom of God beyond the seas? It is in thy heart it should arise."

"It is an awful thing," he continues, "to hear us offer this petition, 'Thy will be done.' Where in the church do we see this 'will of God'? One bishop rises against another bishop; one church against another church. Priests, monks, and nuns quarrel, and thwart, and wage war with each other, and every where discord prevails. And yet each party declares that there is good will and upright intention; and so, to the honour and glory of God, they altogether do the devil's work. . . . ."

"Why do we use the words, 'our bread?'" he continues, expounding these words, '*Give us this day our daily bread.*' "Because we do not pray for the common bread that heathens partake, and which God gives to all men,—but for '*our*' bread, the bread of those who are 'children' of the heavenly Father."

"And what then is this bread of God? It is Jesus Christ our Lord. 'I am the bread of life which came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.' Therefore let no one be deluded: whatever sermons and instructions do not exhibit and make known Jesus Christ, cannot be the daily bread and nourishment of souls."

"Of what use is it that such bread has been provided, if it is not served up, and so we are unable to partake of it? It is as if a noble feast were prepared, and none were ready to distribute the bread,

to place the meats on table, or fill the cups, and so the guests should be reduced to feed on the mere sight and smell. Therefore we must preach Christ alone.

"But, say you, what is it to know Christ? and what good will come of it? I answer; to learn and know Christ, is to understand what the Apostle declares, namely: that 'Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' Now you understand *that*, if you acknowledge all *your* wisdom mere blameworthy foolishness, *your* righteousness a criminal iniquity, *your* holiness a guilty pollution, *your* redemption a miserable sentence of condemnation; if you feel that you are truly, before God, and before all creatures, a fool, a sinner, an impure and condemned man; if you manifest, not by word alone, but from the bottom of your heart, and by your works,—that there is neither salvation nor comfort for you, save only in Christ. To believe is nothing else than *feeding on this bread from heaven.*"

Thus Luther faithfully adhered to his resolution to open the eyes of a blinded people, whom the priests were leading at their pleasure. His writings rapidly dispersed throughout Germany, called up a new light, and shed abundantly the seed of truth on a soil well prepared for it. But, while attending to those who were at a distance, he did not forget those who were nigh at hand.

The Dominicans, from their pulpits, anathematized the infamous heretic. Luther,—the man of the people, and who, if he had desired it, could, by a few words, have called up the popular fury against

them,—disdained such triumphs, and thought only of instructing his hearers.

And he did so. His reputation, which spread more and more widely, and the boldness with which he lifted the banner of Christ in the midst of an enslaved Church, increased the eager attendance on his preaching at Wittemberg. The crowd of hearers was more considerable than ever. Luther went straight to his mark. One day, having ascended the pulpit, he undertook to prove the doctrine of repentance, and on this occasion, he pronounced a discourse which became afterwards very celebrated, and in which he laid down some of the grounds of the evangelical doctrine.

He first contrasted man's pardon with God's pardon. "There are," said he, "two kinds of remission: the remission of the penalty, and the remission of the sin. The first reconciles outwardly the offender with the Church. The second, which is the heavenly grace, reconciles the offender with God. If a man does not find in himself that peace of conscience, that joy of heart which springs from God's remission of sin, there is no indulgence that can help him, though he should buy all that had ever been offered upon earth."

He continues: "They wish to do good works before their sins are forgiven them,—whilst it is indispensable that our sins be pardoned before good works can be done. It is not works which banish sin; but drive out sin and you will have works.* For good works must be done with a joyful heart,

* Nicht die Werke treiben die Sünde aus; sondern die Austreibung der Sünde thut gute Werke. (L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 162.)

and a good conscience toward God, that is, with *remission of sins.*"

He then comes to the chief object of this sermon, which was also the great end of the whole Reformation. The Church had put itself in the place of God and his word; he rejects her assumption, and shews everything to depend on faith in God's word.

"The remission of the sin is out of the power of pope, bishop, priest, or any man living; and rests solely on the word of Christ, and on thine own faith. For Christ did not design that our comfort, our hope, and our salvation, should be built on a word or work of man, but solely on himself, on his work, and on his word. . . . Thy repentance and thy works may deceive thee; but Christ, thy God, will not deceive thee, nor will he falter, and the devil shall not overthrow his words."*

"A pope or a bishop has no more power to remit sin than the humblest priest. And even, without any priest, every christian, even though a woman or a child, can do the same.† 'For if a simple believer say to thee, 'God pardon thy sin in the name of Jesus Christ,'—and thou receive that word with firm faith, and as though God himself spake it to thee—thou art absolved."

"If thou dost not believe that thy sins are forgiven thee, thou makest thy God a liar, and shewest thyself to hold more to thy vain thoughts than to God and his word."

* Christus dein Gott wird dir nicht liigen, noch wanken. (L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 162.)

† Ob es schon ein Weib oder ein kind wäre. (Ibid.)

"Under the Old Testament, neither priest, nor king, nor prophet, had authority to declare remission of sins. But under the New, every believer has this power. The Church is full of remission of sins!* If a devoted christian should comfort thy conscience by the word of the cross, whether that christian be man or woman, young or old, receive that comfort with such faith as to endure death a hundred times, rather than doubt that God has ratified it. Repent; do all the works thou canst; but let *faith* in pardon through Christ, hold the first rank, and command the whole field of your warfare."†

Thus spake Luther to his surprised and delighted hearers. All the superstructures which presumptuous priests had raised for their own gain between God and the soul of man were thrown down, and man brought face to face with his God. The word of forgiveness now descended pure from on high without passing through a thousand corrupting channels. That the witness of God should be received, it was no longer necessary that men should attach to it their delusive seal. The monopoly of the priestly caste was abolished; the Church was delivered from her thraldom.

Meanwhile it was become needful that the flame that had been lighted up in Wittemberg should be kindled elsewhere. Luther, not satisfied with proclaiming the truth of the Gospel in the place of his own abode, as well to the students as to the people,

* Also siehst du dass die ganze Kirche voll von Vergebung der Sünden ist. (L. Opp. L. xvii. p. 162.)

† Und Hauptmann im Felde bleibe. (Ibid.)

was desirous to scatter in other places the seeds of sound doctrine. In the spring of 1518, the order of the Augustines held its chapter general at Heildelberg. Luther was summoned thither as one of the most distinguished men of his order. His friends made every effort to dissuade him from undertaking this journey. In truth, the monks had laboured to make the name of Luther hated in all the places he would have to pass through. To insult they added threats. A little matter would suffice to raise a tumult on his journey, in which he might fall a victim. "Or, else," said his friends, "what they dare not do by violence, they will accomplish by treachery and fraud."* But Luther never allowed himself to be stopped short in the performance of a duty by fear of danger, however imminent. Accordingly, he was deaf to the timid suggestions of his friends; he plainly shewed in whom he put his trust, and under whose protection he was resolved to undertake this dreaded journey. Then the festival of Easter being terminated, he quietly set out on foot,† the 13th April, 1518.

He took with him a guide, named Urban, who carried his little baggage, and was to accompany him as far as Wurtzburg. What thoughts must have crowded the heart of this servant of the Lord, during his journey! At Weissenfels, the pastor, who had no previous knowledge of him, recognised him immediately as the Doctor of Wittemberg, and received him cordially.‡ At Erfurth, two

* L. Epp. i. p. 98. † Pedester veniam. (Ibid.)

‡ L. Epp. i. p. 105.

other brethren of the order of the Augustines joined company with him. At Judenbach, the three travellers met Degenhard Pfeffinger, the confidential adviser of the Elector, and were entertained by him at the inn "I had the pleasure," writes Luther to Spalatin, "of making the rich lord poorer by some *groschen;* you know how I love on all occasions to levy contributions on the rich for the advantage of the poor; especially when the rich are friends of mine."* He reached Coburg, overcome with fatigue. "All goes well, by God's favour," wrote he, "unless it be that I must acknowledge myself to have sinned in undertaking this journey on foot. But for that sin I think I have no need of any *indulgence,* for my contrition is perfect, and the satisfaction plenary. I am exhausted with fatigue, and all the conveyances are full. Is not this enough, and more than enough, of penance, contrition, and satisfaction?"†

The Reformer of Germany, not finding room in the public conveyances, nor any one willing to give up his place to him, was obliged, on the following morning, notwithstanding his weariness, to set out again from Coburg, on foot. He arrived at Wurtzburg the second Sunday after Easter, towards evening. From thence he sent back his guide.

It was in this town that the Bishop of Bibra resided, who had received his theses with so much approbation. Luther was the bearer of a letter to him from the Elector of Saxony. The Bishop, delighted with the opportunity thus offered of becoming personally acquainted with this courageous

* L. Epp i. p. 104. † Ibid. 106.

champion of the truth, immediately invited him to the episcopal palace. He himself went to meet him, addressed him very affectionately, and offered to procure him a guide as far as Heidelberg. But Luther had met at Wurtzburg his two friends, the Vicar-general Staupitz, and Lange, the Prior of Erfurth, and had been offered a seat in their carriage. He therefore thanked Bibra for his proffered kindness, and the next day the three friends set out from Wurtzburg. They travelled in this manner for three days, conversing together. On the 21st of April they reached Heidelberg. Luther alighted at the convent of the Augustines.

The Elector of Saxony had given him a letter for the Count Palatine Wolfgang, Duke of Bavaria. Luther repaired to his magnificent castle, the delightful situation of which is even at this day the admiration of strangers. The monk, a native of the plains of Saxony, had a heart capable of admiring the picturesque situation of Heidelberg, commanding the two beautiful valleys of the Rhine and the Necker. He delivered his letter of recommendation to John Simler, the steward of the household. The latter, on reading it, observed: "Truly, you have a valuable letter of credit here."* The Count Palatine received Luther very graciously. He invited him repeatedly to his table, together with Lange and Staupitz. It was a great comfort to Luther to meet with so friendly a reception. "We were very happy together," says he, "and amused each other with agreeable and pleasant conversation, taking our repasts, examining the

* Ihr habt, bei Gott, einen köstlichen Credenz. (L. Epp. 1. iii.)

beauties of the Palatine palace, admiring the ornaments, the armoury, cuirasses, and every thing remarkable that this celebrated and truly royal castle contains."*

But Luther had another task to perform. He must work while it was yet day. Called for a time to a university which exercised an extensive influence over the west and south of Germany, he was there to strike a blow which should put in movement the churches of those countries. He began therefore to write some theses, which he proposed to maintain in a public disputation. Such disputations were not unusual; but Luther felt that, to make this useful, it must be of a striking character. His natural disposition, moreover, prompted him to present truth in a paradoxical form. The professors of the university would not suffer the disputation to take place in their great hall. A room was, therefore, engaged in the convent of the Augustines, and the 26th of April was fixed for the discussion.

Heidelberg at a later period received the evangelical doctrine. One who was present at the conference in the convent of the Augustines might have then foreseen, that that conference would one day bear fruit.

The reputation of Luther attracted a numerous auditory,—professors, courtiers, burghers, students, came in crowds. The following are some of the Doctor's "paradoxes,"—for by that name he designated his theses. Even in our day, perhaps, some might give them no better name; yet it would be

* L. Epp. l. iii.

easy to render them in propositions obvious to common sense.

"1. The law of God is a salutary rule of life; and yet it cannot help man in the obtaining of righteousness; but on the contrary impedes him."

"3. Works of men, let them be as fair and good as they may, are yet evidently nothing but mortal sins."

"4. Works that are of God, however unsightly and evil in appearance, have yet an endless efficacy."

"7. The works of the righteous themselves would be mortal sins,—if, from a holy reverence of the Lord, they did not fear that their works might indeed be mortal sins."*

"9. To say that works done out of Christ are truly dead works,—but not mortal sins,—is a dangerous forgetfulness of the fear of God."

"13. Free will, since the fall of man, is but an empty word; and if man does all he can, he still sins mortally."

"16. A man who dreams he can attain to grace by doing all that is in his power, adds sin to sin,—and is doubly guilty."

"18. It is certain that man must altogether despair of his own ability, if he would be made capable of receiving the grace of Christ."

"21. A theologian of this world calls good—evil, and evil—good; but a teacher of the cross is a teacher of truth."

"22. The wisdom which applies itself to learn the invisible perfections of God from his works, puffs up, blinds, and hardens men."

* Justorum opera essent mortalia, nisi pio Dei timore ab ipsismet justis ut mortalia timerentur. (L. Opp. lat. i. 55.)

"23. The law calls forth God's anger: slays, accurses, judges, and condemns, whatsoever is not *in Christ.*"*

"24. Yet this wisdom (§. 22,) is not an evil; and the law (§. 23.) is not to be rejected; but he who learns not the wisdom of God under the Cross, turns to evil whatever is good."

"25. That man is not justified who does many works; but he who, without having yet done works, has much faith in Christ."

"26. The law says, 'Do this,' and what it enjoins is never done; Grace says, 'Believe in him,' and immediately all is perfected."†

"28. The love of God finds nothing in man, but creates in him what He loves. Man's love is the gift of his well beloved."‡

Five doctors of divinity attacked these theses. They had read them with the surprise that their novelty excited. Such theology seemed to them extravagant. They, however, entered on the discussion, as Luther tells us, with a courtesy which inspired him with much esteem for them; yet with great earnestness and discernment. Luther, on his part, manifested unusual mildness in his mode of reply, unrivalled patience in listening to the objections of his opponents, and all the quickness of St. Paul in solving the difficulties opposed to him.

* Lex iram Dei operatur, occidit, maledicit, reum facit, judicat, damnat, quicquid non est in Christo. (L. Opp. lat. i. 55.)

† Lex dicit: Fac hoc! et nunquam fit. Gratia dicit: Crede in hunc, et jam facta sunt omnia. (Ibid.)

‡ Amor Dei non invenit sed creat suum diligibile; amor hominis fit à suo diligibili.

His answers,—short, but full of the word of God,—astonished his hearers. "He is exactly like Erasmus," said many, "except that he surpasses him in one thing;—that is, he openly professes what Erasmus was satisfied with insinuating."*

The disputation was drawing near to its close. The adversaries of Luther had, at least, retreated with honour from the field; the youngest of them, Doctor George Niger, alone continued the contest with the powerful disputant; alarmed at the bold propositions of the Augustine monk, and not knowing what argument to have recourse to, he exclaimed, with an accent of fear, "If our peasantry heard such things, they would stone you to death."† At these words a general laugh went round the assembly.

Yet never did an auditory listen with more attention to a theological discussion. The first words of the Reformer had aroused men's minds. Questions, which but a little while before, would have met only with indifference, were, at that hour, teeming with interest. An observer might have read in the countenances of those present the new ideas which the bold assertions of the Saxon Doctor awakened in their minds.

Three youths, especially, were much affected. One of them, by name Martin Bucer, was a Dominican, of twenty-seven years of age, who, in spite of the prejudices of his order, seemed unwilling to lose a word of the Doctor's remarks. A native of a

* Bucer in Schultetet. Annal. Evang. renovat. p. 22.

† Si rustici hæc audirent, certe lapidibus vos obruerent et interficerent. (L. Epp. i. p. 111.)

small town in Alsace, he had, in his sixteenth year, entered a convent. He soon shewed such capacity, that the more enlightened of the monks formed high expectations of him.* "He will, one day," said they, "be an honour to our order." His superiors accordingly sent him to Heidelberg, that he might apply himself to the study of philosophy, theology, Greek, and Hebrew. At that period, Erasmus published several of his writings. Martin Bucer read them with avidity.

Shortly after this, the first published writings of Luther appeared. The student of Alsace hastened to compare the doctrines of the Reformer with the Holy Scriptures. Some misgivings as to the truth of Popery were then awakened in his mind.† It was in this way that light was spread in those days. The Elector Palatine took notice of the young man. His powerful and sonorous voice and agreeable manners, his eloquence, and the freedom with which he attacked the prevailing vices, made his preaching remarkable. Appointed chaplain to the Elector, he was fulfilling the functions of his office, when he heard of Luther's visit to Heidelberg. How great was his joy! He was among the first to repair to the hall of the convent of the Augustines. He had with him paper, pens, and ink, intending to take notes. But whilst his hand rapidly traced the words of Luther, the hand of God wrote in imperishable characters on his heart the great truths he heard.

* Prudentioribus monachis spem de se præclaram excitavit. (Melch. Adam. Vit. Buceri, p. 211.)

† Cum doctrinam in eis traditam cum sacris literis contulisset, quædam in pontificiâ religione suspecta habere cœpit. (Ibid.)

The first gleams of the doctrine of grace diffused themselves in his soul in the course of that memorable hour.* The Dominican was won to Christ.

Not far from Bucer sate John Brentz, or Brentius, then nineteen years of age. Brentz, son of a magistrate of a town in Suabia, had been entered student at Heidelberg in his thirteenth year. His application was unequalled. He rose at midnight for study. This custom had become so confirmed, that in after life he could never sleep after that hour. But, at a later period, he devoted the stillness of these seasons to meditation on the Scriptures. Brentz was one of the first to discern the new light then appearing in Germany. He hailed it with a soul overflowing with love.† He eagerly perused the writings of Luther. But how was he rejoiced at the opportunity of hearing him at Heidelberg! One of the Doctor's propositions especially struck young Brentz. It was this: "That man is not justified in the sight of God who does many works; but he who, without having yet done works, has much faith in Christ."

A pious woman of Heilbronn, on the Necker, the wife of one of the council of that town, named Snepf, following the example of Hannah, had dedicated her first-born son to the Lord, in the fervent desire to see him devote himself to the study of divinity. This young man, born in 1495, made rapid progress in learning; but either from liking,

* Primam lucem purioris sententiæ de justificatione in suo pectore sensit. (Melch. Adam. Vit. Buceri, p. 211.)

† Ingens Dei beneficium lætus Brentius agnovit, et gratâ mente amplexus est. (Ibid.)

or from ambition, or else in compliance with his father's desire, he took to the study of jurisprudence. The pious mother grieved to see her son Ehrhard pursuing a course different from that to which she had consecrated him. She admonished him, expostulated, and again and again reminded him of her vow made at his birth.* At length, overcome by his mother's perseverance, Ehrhard Snepf complied, and he soon had such a relish for his new studies, that nothing could have diverted him from them.

He was very intimate with Bucer and Brentz, and this friendship continued as long as they lived; "for," says one of their historians, "friendships founded on the love of literature and of virtue are always lasting." He was present with his two friends at the disputation at Heidelberg. The paradoxes and courageous efforts of the Doctor of Wittemberg gave a new impulse to his mind. Rejecting the vain opinion of human merit, he embraced the doctrine of the free justification of the sinner.

The next day, Bucer went to Luther. "I had," says he, "a familiar private conversation with him, a most exquisite repast—of no ordinary viands, but of the truths which he set before me. To every objection that I made, the Doctor had a ready reply; and he explained every thing with the greatest clearness. Oh! would to God I had time to write you more about it."† Luther was himself affected with Bucer's deep emotion. "He is the only brother of

* Crebris interpellationibus cum voti quod de nato ipsa fecerat admoneret, et a studio juris ad theologiam quasi conviciis avocaret. (Melch. Adami Snepfii Vita.)

† Gerdesius, Monument. Antiq. &c.

his order," he wrote to Spalatin, "who is sincere; he is a young man of great promise. He received me with simplicity, and conversed very earnestly. He deserves our love and confidence."*

Brentz, Snepf, and many others, moved by the new truths which were beginning to enlighten their minds, also visited Luther; they talked and conferred with him; they requested an explanation of what they had not understood. The Reformer, leaning on the word of God, answered them. Every word he spoke imparted fresh light to their minds. A new world seemed to open before them.

After the departure of Luther, these noble-minded men began to teach at Heidelberg. It was fit that they should carry on what the man of God had begun, and not leave the torch that he had kindled to expire. The disciple will speak when the teacher is silent. Brentz, young as he was, undertook to expound St. Matthew's Gospel,—at first in his own room—afterwards, when that apartment was found too small, in the hall of Philosophy. The theologians, envious at the concourse of hearers that this young man drew together, betrayed their irritation. Brentz then took orders, and transferred his lectures to the college of the canons of the Holy Ghost. Thus the fire, already kindled in Saxony, was communicated to Heidelberg. The light spread rapidly. This period has been called the seed-time of the Palatinate.

But it was not the Palatinate alone that reaped the fruits of that memorable disputation at Heidelberg. These courageous friends of the truth soon

* L. Epp. i. p. 412.

became shining lights in the Church. All of them attained to eminent stations, and took a conspicuous part in the transactions to which the Reformation gave birth. Strasburg, and afterwards England, were indebted to the labours of Bucer for a purer knowledge of the truth. Snepf first declared it at Marburg, then at Stuttgard, at Tubingen, and at Jena. And Brentz, after having laboured at Heidelberg, taught for a long time at Halle in Suabia, and at Tubingen. We shall meet with them again, as we trace the course of the Reformation.

This disputation carried forward Luther himself. He increased from day to day in the knowledge of the truth. "I am one of those," said he, "who have myself made progress by writing for and instructing others,—not one of those who, without any such training, have suddenly become great and learned doctors."

He was delighted to see the eagerness with which the young students received the growing truth. This it was that comforted him when he found the old doctors so deeply-rooted in their opinions. "I have the glorious hope," said he, "that even as Christ, when rejected by the Jews, turned towards the Gentiles, so we shall see the rising generation receive the true theology, which, these old men, wedded to their vain and fantastical opinions, now obstinately reject."*

The chapter being ended, Luther proposed returning to Wittemberg. The Count Palatine gave him a letter for the Elector, dated the 1st of May, in which he said that "the skill which Luther had

* L. Epp. i. p. 112.

shewn in the disputation did great honour to the university of Wittemberg." He was not allowed to return on foot.* The Augustines of Nuremberg conducted him as far as Wurtzburg. From thence he went to Erfurth with the brethren of that city. Immediately on his arrival, he paid a visit to his former master, Jodocus. The old professor, much grieved and scandalized at the course his pupil had taken, was accustomed to prefix to all Luther's propositions a *theta*, the letter which the Greeks made use of to denote condemnation,† On several occasions he had written to the young doctor in a style of reproach. The latter wished to answer these letters by word of mouth. Not being admitted, he wrote to his master: "All the university, with the exception of one licentiate, think as I do. Nay, more: the Prince, the Bishop, several other prelates, and all the most enlightened of our citizens, declare unanimously that till now they never knew or understood Christ and his Gospel. I am willing to receive your reproofs. And even should they be harsh, they will appear gentle to me. Open your heart, therefore, without fear; express your displeasure: I will not and cannot be angry with you. God and my own conscience are my witnesses."‡

The old doctor was affected by these expressions of his former pupil. He wished to try whether there were no means of removing the condemnatory *theta*. They talked over the subject, but to no pur-

* Veni autem curru qui ieram pedester. (L. Epp. i. p. 110.)

† Omnibus placitis meis nigrum theta præfigit. (Ibid. p. 111.)

‡ L. Epp. i. p. 111.

pose. "I made him understand, however," says Luther, "that all their dogmas were like that creature which is said to devour itself. But it is useless to talk to a deaf man. These doctors cling to their petty distinctions, though they confess that they have nothing to confirm them but what they call the light of natural reason,—a gloomy chaos to us who proclaim the one true and only light, Christ Jesus."*

Luther quitted Erfurth in the carriage belonging to the convent, which took him to Eisleben. From thence the Augustines of the place, proud of the doctor who had done such honour to their order and their town, which was his native place, furnished him with horses to proceed to Wittemberg at their expense. Every one wished to show some mark of affection and esteem to this extraordinary man, whose fame was daily increasing.

He arrived on the Saturday after Ascension day. The journey had done him good, and his friends thought him looking stronger and in better health than before he set out.† They rejoiced at all that he related. Luther rested for a while after the fatigue of his journey and his dispute at Heidelberg; but this rest was only a preparation for severer labours.

* Nisi dictamine rationis naturalis, quod apud nos idem est quod chaos tenebratum, qui non prædicamus aliam lucem quam Christum Jesum lucem veram et solam. (L. Epp. i. p. 111.)

† Ita ut nonnullis videar factus habilior et corpulentior. (L. Epp. i. p. 111.)

BOOK IV.

LUTHER BEFORE THE LEGATE.

MAY TO DECEMBER, 1518.

AT length Truth had raised its head in the midst of the nations of Christendom. Having triumphed over the inferior instruments of the papal power, it was now to enter upon a struggle with its head himself. We are about to contemplate Luther in close conflict with Rome.

It was after his return from Heidelberg that Luther advanced to the attack. His first Theses on the indulgences had been imperfectly understood. He resolved to set forth their meaning more plainly. He had found, by the clamours proceeding from the blindness and hatred of his enemies, how important it was to gain over to the side of the truth the more enlightened portion of the nation:—he decided therefore to appeal to its judgment, by presenting to it the grounds on which his new convictions rested. It was quite necessary to invite the decision of Rome; he did not hesitate to send thither his explanations; while with one hand he held them forth to all his impartial and enlightened fellow-countrymen, he, with the other, laid them before the footstool of the Sovereign Pontiff.

These explanations of his theses, which he called *solutions*,* were written with great moderation. Luther tried to soften the passages that had occasioned irritation, and evinced a genuine modesty.

* L. Opp. Leipsig. xvii. p. 29 to 113.

But, at the same time, he manifested an immoveable conviction, and courageously defended every proposition that truth obliged him to maintain. He repeated, once more, that every Christian who truly repented had remission of sins without any indulgence; that the Pope had no more power than the lowest priest to do anything beyond simply declaring the forgiveness that God had already granted; that the treasury of the merits of saints, administered by the Pope was a pure fiction; and that holy Scripture was the sole rule of faith. But let us listen to his own statement of some of these things.

He begins by laying down the nature of true repentance, and contrasts that act of God, by which man is regenerated, with the mummeries of the Romish Church. "The Greek word *μετανοεῖτε*," said he, "signifies, put on a new spirit, a new mind,—take to you a new nature, so that, ceasing to be earthly, you may become heavenly: Christ is a teacher of the spirit, and not of the letter, and his words are spirit and life." Thus he teaches a repentance in spirit and in truth, and not those outward penances which the haughtiest sinner may perform without any real humiliation,—he requires a repentance, which may be wrought in every situation of life,—under the purple robe of kings, under the priest's cassock, the prince's hat,—in the midst of the splendours of Babylon, where Daniel dwelt, —as well as under the monk's frock, or the mendicant's rags.*

Further on we read these bold words: "I care little what pleases or displeases the Pope. He is

* On the first Thesis.

a man like other men. There have been many popes who have not only taken up with errors and vices, but things yet more extraordinary. I listen to the Pope as pope, that is, when he speaks in the canons, agreeably to the canons, or regulates any matter conjointly with a council,—but not when he speaks of his own mind. If I acted on any other rule, might I not be required to say, with those who know not Jesus Christ, that the horrible massacres of Christians, by which Julius II. was stained, were the good deeds of a kind shepherd of the Lord's sheep?"*

"I must needs wonder," he continues, "at the simplicity of those who have said that the two swords in the Gospel represent the one the spiritual, the other the temporal power. True it is, that the Pope holds a sword of iron, and thus offers himself to the view of Christians not as a tender father, but as an awful tyrant. Alas! God, in his anger, hath given us the sword we preferred, and withdrawn that which we despised. Nowhere, in all the earth, have there been more cruel wars than among Christians. Why did not the same ingenious critic who supplied this fine commentary, interpret the narrative of the two keys delivered to St. Peter in the same subtle manner, and establish, as a dogma of the Church, that one serves to unlock the treasury of heaven, and the other the treasures of this world?"†

"It is impossible," says he, "for a man to be a Christian without having Christ; and, if he has Christ, he has, at the same time, all that is in Christ. What gives peace to the conscience is that,

* Thesis 26. † Thesis 80.

by faith, our sins are no more ours, but Christ's, upon whom God hath laid them all; and that, on the other hand, all Christ's righteousness is ours, to whom God hath given it. Christ lays his hand upon us, and we are healed. He casts his mantle upon us, and we are clothed; for he is the glorious Saviour, blessed for ever."*

With such views of the riches of salvation by Christ, there could no longer be any need of indulgences.

At the same time that Luther thus attached the papal rule, he spoke honourably of Leo X. "The times we live in," said he, "are so evil, that even persons of the highest station have no power to help the Church. We have at this time a very good Pope in Leo X. His sincerity and learning are a matter of joy to us. But what can he do alone, amiable and gracious as he is? He deserved, assuredly, to be elected Pope in better times. In these days we deserve none but such as Julius II. or Alexander VI."

He then came to his point.—"I will speak out, in a few words and boldly.—The Church requires to be reformed. And it is a work neither for one man, as the Pope,—nor for several, as the cardinals and fathers in council assembled,—but for the whole world; or rather it is a work which appertains to God alone. As to the time when such Reformation shall commence, he only knows it who has appointed all times. The barriers are thrown down, and it is no longer in our power to restrain the overflowing billows."

* Thesis 37.

These are a few of the declarations and thoughts which Luther addressed to the more enlightened of his countrymen. Whitsuntide was drawing near; and thus it was at the same season in which the apostles rendered to their risen Saviour the first testimony of their faith, that Luther, the new apostle, published this animated testimony, in which he breathed forth his ardent desires for the resurrection of the Church. On Whitsun-eve, 22d May, 1518, he despatched this writing to the Bishop of Brandenburg, his ordinary, accompanied with these words:

"Most worthy Father in God!

"It is now some time since a new and unheard-of doctrine, concerning the apostolic indulgences began to be preached in these parts: the learned and the unlearned were troubled by it; and many persons known, or personally unknown to me, requested me to declare from the pulpit, or by writing, my opinion of the novelty—I will not say the impudence—of the doctrine I refer to. At first I kept myself silent and neutral. But, at last, things came to such a pass, that the Pope's holiness was compromised.

"What could I do? I thought it my part neither to approve nor condemn these doctrines, but to open a discussion on this important subject, till such time as the holy Church should pronounce upon it.

"No one presenting himself, or accepting the challenge to a discussion to which I had invited all the world, and my theses being considered not as matter for debate, but as propositions dogmatically asserted;*—I find myself obliged to put forth

* Non ut disputabilia sed asserta acciperentur. (L. Epp. i. 114.)

an explanation of them. Deign, therefore, to accept these offerings* that I present to you, most clement Bishop. And that all may see that I am not acting presumptuously, I entreat your reverence to take pen and ink and blot out or even throw into the fire whatever may displease you. I know that Christ needs none of my labour or services, and that he can easily, without my instrumentality, make known the good tidings in his church. Not that the denunciations and threats of my enemies alarm me. Quite the contrary. If they were not so wanting in prudence, and lost to shame, no one should hear or know anything about me. I would immure myself in a corner, and there study alone for my own profit. If this matter is not of God, it will certainly not be to my honour, nor to the honour of any man, but will come to nought. May glory and honour be to him to whom alone they belong!"

Luther was, up to this time, under the influence of respect for the head of the church: he gave credit to Leo for justice and a love of truth. Accordingly he resolved to write to him also. A week after, on Trinity Sunday, 30th May, 1518, he addressed to him a letter, of which the following are some fragments.

"To the most blessed Father, Pope Leo X., Supreme Bishop,—brother Martin Luther, an Augustine, wishes eternal salvation!

"I hear, most holy Father, that evil reports circulate concerning me, and that my name is in bad odour with your Holiness. I am called a heretic,

* Ineptias.

an apostate, a traitor, and a thousand other reproachful names. What I see surprises me, and what I hear alarms me. But the sole foundation of my tranquillity remains unmoved, being a pure and quiet conscience. O, holy Father! deign to hearken to me, who am but a child and need instruction."

Luther then relates the affair from its beginning, and thus proceeds:

"Nothing was heard in all the taverns but complaints of the avarice of the priests, attacks on the power of the keys, and of the supreme bishop. I call all Germany to witness. When I heard these things, my zeal was aroused for the glory of Christ, —if I understand my own heart; or if another construction is to be put on my conduct,—my young and warm blood was inflamed.

"I represented the matter to certain princes of the Church, but some laughed at me, and others turned a deaf ear. The awe of your name seemed to have made all motionless. Thereupon, I published this dispute.

"This, then, holy Father, this is the action which has been said to have set the whole world in a flame!

"And now what am I to do? I cannot retract what I have said, and I see that this publication draws down on me, from all sides, an inexpressible hatred. I have no wish to appear in the great world,—for I am unlearned, of small wit, and far too inconsiderable for such great matters, more especially in this illustrious age, when Cicero him-

self, if he were living, would be constrained to hide himself in some dark corner.*

"But in order to appease my enemies and satisfy the desires of many friends, I here publish my thoughts. I publish them, holy Father, that I may dwell the more safely under your protection. All those who desire it may here see with what simplicity of heart, I have petitioned the supreme authority of the Church to instruct me, and what respect I have manifested for the power of the keys.† If I had not acted with propriety, it would have been impossible that the serene lord Frederic, Duke and Elector of Saxony, who shines foremost among the friends of the apostolic and christian truth, should have endured that one, so dangerous as I am asserted to be, should continue in his university of Wittemberg.

"Therefore, most holy Father, I throw myself at the feet of your Holiness, and submit myself to you, with all that I have and all that I am. Destroy my cause or espouse it: pronounce either for, or against me; take my life, or restore it, as you please; I will receive your voice as that of Christ himself, who presides and speaks through you. If I have deserved death, I refuse not to die;‡ the

* "Sed cogit necessitas me anserem strepere inter olores," adds Luther. (L. Epp. i. p. 121.)

† Quam purè simpliciterque ecclesiasticam potestatem et reverentiam clavium quæsierim et coluerim. (Ibid.)

‡ Quare, beatissime Pater, prostratum me pedibus tuæ Beatitudinis offero, cum omnibus quæ sum et habeo; vivifica, occide; voca, revoca; approba, reproba, ut placuerit. Vocem tuam vocem Christi in te præsidentis et loquentis agnoscam. Si mortem merui, mori non recusabo. (Ibid.)

earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is. May He be praised for ever and ever. May He maintain you to all eternity. Amen.

"Signed the day of the Holy Trinity, in the year 1518. Brother Martin Luther, Augustine."

What humility and truth in this fear, or rather this admission of Luther, that his young and warm blood had perhaps taken fire too hastily! We see here the man of sincerity, who, instead of presuming on himself, dreads the influence of his passions, even in such actions as are most conformable to the commandment of God. This is not the language of a proud fanatic. We behold Luther's earnest desire to gain over Leo to the cause of truth, to avoid all schism, and to cause the Reformation (the necessity of which he proclaimed,) to proceed from the highest authority in the Church. Certainly, it is not he who can be accused of having broken up that unity of the Western Church, which so many of all sects have since regretted. On the contrary, he gave up everything but truth that he might maintain it. It was his adversaries who, refusing to allow the fulness and sufficiency of the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ, tore to shreds the Lord's vesture at the foot of the cross.

After writing this letter, Luther, on the same day, wrote to his friend Staupitz, Vicar-general of his order. It was through him that he resolved to forward to Leo both his "Solutions" and his letter.

"I beg of you," said he, "to receive with favour the poor productions that I send you,* and to forward them to the excellent Pope Leo X. Not that

* The Solutions.

I mean by this to draw you into the peril in which I stand; I am resolved myself to incur the whole danger. Christ will look to it, and make it appear whether what I have said comes from him or myself,—Christ, without whom the Pope's tongue cannot move, nor the hearts of kings decree.

"As for those who threaten me, I have no answer for them but the saying of Reuchlin: 'The poor man has nothing to fear, for he has nothing to lose.'* I have neither money nor estate, and I desire none. If I have sometimes tasted of honour and good report, may He who has begun to strip me of them finish his work. All that is left me is this wretched body, enfeebled by many trials:—let them kill it by violence or fraud, so it be to the glory of God: by so doing they will but shorten the term of my life by a few hours. It is sufficient for me that I have a precious Redeemer, a powerful High Priest, my Lord Jesus Christ. I will praise him as long as I have breath. If another will not join me in praising him, what is that to me?"

In these words we read the innermost heart of Luther.

Whilst he was thus placing confidence in Rome, Rome had thoughts of vengeance against him. As early as the 3rd of April, Cardinal Raphael de Rovera had written to the Elector Frederic in the Pope's name, to intimate that some suspicion was entertained of his fidelity, and to desire him to avoid protecting Luther. "The Cardinal Raphael," observed the latter, "would have been well pleased

* Qui pauper est nihil timet, nihil potest perdere. (L. Epp. i. 118.)

to see me burned alive by Duke Frederic."* Thus Rome was beginning to turn her arms against Luther; her first blow was directed to the depriving him of his protector's favour. If she succeeded in destroying this shelter of the monk of Wittemberg, he would fall an easy prey to her agents.

The German sovereigns were very tenacious of their reputation as Christian princes. The slightest suspicion of heresy filled them with fears. The Roman Court had skilfully taken advantage of this disposition of mind. Frederic had always been attached to the religion of his fathers. Hence the Cardinal Raphael's letter produced a very considerable impression upon his mind. But, on the other hand, the Elector made it a rule never to be hasty in any thing. He knew that truth was not always on the side of the strongest. The disputes of the Empire with Rome had taught him to discern the interested views of that court. He had arrived at the conviction that, to be a christian prince, it was not necessary to be a slave to the Pope.

"He was not one of those profane persons," says Melancthon, "who would stifle all changes in their very birth. Frederic submitted himself to the will of God. He carefully read the writings that were put forth, and would not allow any to destroy what he thought true." He possessed this power. Besides, being absolute sovereign of his own dominions, he enjoyed at least as much respect throughout the Empire as was paid to the Emperor himself.

It is probable that Luther received some intimation of this letter of Cardinal Raphael's, which

* L. Opp. (W.) xv. p. 339.

reached the Elector on the 7th of July. Perhaps it was in the prospect of excommunication, which this Roman missive seemed to forebode, that he ascended the pulpit of Wittemberg on the 15th of the same month, and preached a discourse on that topic, which made a deep impression on his hearers. He explained the distinction between *inward* and *outward* excommunications, the former excluding from communion with God, and the latter, from the rites and ceremonies of the Church. "No one," said he, "can reconcile the fallen soul to God but the Lord. No one can separate a man from communion with God but that man himself, by his own sins. Blessed is that man who dies under an unjust sentence of excommunication! Whilst, for righteousness' sake, he suffers a cruel judgment from men, he receives from God the crown of everlasting happiness!"

Some loudly commended this bold language; others were yet more enraged by it.

But Luther did not now stand alone; and though his faith needed no other support than that of God himself, he had called up on all sides a power that protected him from his enemies. The voice of this man had been heard by the whole German nation. From his sermons and writings issued beams of light which awakened and illuminated his contemporaries. The energy of his faith rushed like a stream of fire upon the frozen hearts of men. The life which God had given to this extraordinary mind was imported to the dead body of the Church. Christendom, which had remained motionless for so many years, was now alive with religious enthusiasm.

The popular attachment to the superstitions of Romanism was daily lessening; those who came with money in hand to purchase pardon were every day fewer;* and the reputation of Luther was every day extended. Men's thoughts were directed toward him, and he was hailed with affection and respect, as the intrepid defender of truth and freedom.† Doubtless all did not penetrate the depth of the doctrines he proclaimed. It was enough for the greater number to know that the new doctor stood up against the Pope; and that, at his powerful word, the dominion of the priests and monks was tottering to its fall. The attack of Luther was to them like a beacon-fire on a mountain top, which announces to a whole people the moment for bursting their bonds. Luther was not aware of the influence he had obtained, till all the generous spirits among his countrymen had by acclamation acknowledged him their leader. But to many the appearance of Luther was much more than this. The word of God, which he handled with so much power, penetrated to the souls of men like a two-edged sword. In many hearts an ardent desire was kindled to obtain the assurance of pardon and everlasting life. Since the first ages of the Church, there had not been witnessed such hungering and thirsting after righteousness. If the preaching of Peter the Hermit and of Bernard had induced multitudes, during the middle ages, to assume outwardly the symbol of the cross, the preaching of Luther

* Rarescebant manus largentium. (Cochlæus, 7.)

† Luthero autem contra angebatur auctoritas, favor, fides, æstimatio.

influenced the hearts of men to take up the true cross,—the truth that saves the soul. The superstructure, which then encumbered the Church, had smothered true piety: the form had extinguished the spirit. The word of power given to Luther was as a breath of life to Christendom. At first sight the writings of Luther carried with them the sympathy both of the faithful and of the unbeliever; —of the latter, because the positive doctrines, afterwards to be established, were not yet fully opened; of the former, because those doctrines were in principle comprised in that living faith, which his writings set forth with so much power. Hence the influence of those writings was unbounded. They spread instantaneously throughout Germany, and the whole world. Every where a persuasion existed that what men now beheld was not merely the rise of a new sect, but a new birth of the Church and of society. Those who were then born again by the breath of God's Spirit rallied round him who had been instrumental in imparting to them spiritual life. Christendom was divided into two opposing parties; the one contending for the spirit against form; and the other for form against the spirit. On the side of form there was, it is true, every appearance of strength and magnificence; on the side of the spirit there was weakness and littleness. But form, void of the spirit, is as an empty body which the first breath may overthrow. Its resemblance of strength serves only to exasperate hostility and hasten its downfall. Thus the simple word of truth had called forth a whole host in favour of Luther.

It could not be otherwise, for the nobles were

beginning to bestir themselves, and the empire and the Church were already uniting their forces to rid themselves of the troublesome monk. The Emperor Maximilian was then holding an imperial diet at Augsburg. Six Electors had repaired thither in person at his summons. All the Germanic states had their representatives in this assembly. The kings of France, of Hungary, and of Poland, had sent ambassadors. All these princes and envoys displayed great magnificence. The war against the Turks was one of the causes for which the diet was held. The Sultan Selim, after having poisoned his father, and put his brothers and their children to death, had carried his victorious arms into Armenia, Egypt, and Syria. Serious apprehensions were entertained that he might push forward his armies into Italy and Hungary. It was not long, however, before death closed his career. But Leo X. did not, on that account, abandon the project of a new crusade. His legate earnestly exhorted the Germanic states to prepare for war. "Let the clergy," said he, "pay a tenth, the laity a fiftieth part of their property; let each family furnish the pay of one soldier; let the rich give annual contributions, and all will go well." The states, bearing in mind the bad use that had been made of former contributions, and influenced by the prudent advice of the Elector Frederic, contented themselves with answering that they would consider the matter, and at the same time brought forward new grievances against Rome. A Latin discourse, published whilst the Diet was sitting, boldly pointed out to the German princes the real danger. "You wish," said

the author, "to expel the Turk. Your intention is good, but I fear you are mistaken as to his person. You must look for him in Italy, and not in Asia. Each of our princes has power sufficient to defend his country against the Turk of Asia; but as to the Turk of *Rome*, the whole of Christendom is not sufficient to conquer him. The former has not yet done us any harm; the latter walketh about everywhere thirsting for the blood of the poor."*

Another affair no less important was to engage the attention of the Diet. Maximilian wished to have his grandson Charles, who was already King of Spain and Naples, proclaimed King of the Romans, and his successor in the Imperial dignity. The Pope understood his own interest too well to wish to see the throne of the Empire filled by a prince whose power in Italy might make him so formidable to himself. The Emperor imagined that he had gained over to his side the majority of the Electors and of the states; but he met with a decided opposition from Frederic. It was in vain that he solicited him; in vain did the ministers and best friends of the Elector join their entreaties to the solicitations of the Emperor; the Prince was inexorable, and shewed, as has been observed, that he had firmness of mind not to depart from a resolution of which he had seen the propriety. The Emperor's design failed.

From that time Maximilian sought to insinuate himself into the good graces of the Pope, in order to win his assent to his favourite plan. Wishing to give him a particular proof of his attachment, he

* Schröck, K. Gesch. n. d. R. I. p. 156.

wrote to him (on the 5th of August) the following letter: "Most holy Father, we were informed some days since, that a brother of the Augustine order, named Martin Luther, had taken on himself to maintain certain propositions relative to the sale of indulgences. What gives us the more concern is, that the aforesaid brother meets with many protectors, amongst whom are some of exalted rank.* If your Holiness, and the most reverend Fathers of the Church (the Cardinals) do not promptly exert your authority to put an end to these scandalous proceedings, these mischievous teachers will not only seduce the common people, but will involve great princes in their destruction. We will be careful to enforce throughout our Empire, whatever your Holiness shall decree on this subject, to the glory of Almighty God."

This letter must have been written in consequence of some rather warm discussion that Maximilian had had with Frederic. The same day the Elector wrote to Raphael de Rovera. He was doubtless apprised that the Emperor was addressing the Roman Pontiff, and, in order to parry the blow, he himself opened a communication with Rome.

"It will ever be my desire," said he, "to prove my submission to the universal Church.

"Therefore have I never defended the writings and discourses of Doctor Martin Luther. I hear, however, that he has uniformly expressed his willingness to appear, under a safe-conduct, before learned, christian, and impartial judges, to defend

* Defensores et patronos etiam potentes quos dictus frater consecutus est. (Raynald ad an. 1518.)

his doctrine, and to submit to their decision, if they should be able by the Scriptures, to convince him of error."*

Leo X., who, until this hour, had allowed the matter to take its course, roused at length by the outcry of the theologians and monks, now appointed an ecclesiastical court in Rome, for the purpose of judging Luther, and in which the Reformer's great enemy, Sylvester Prierias, was at once accuser and judge. The preliminaries were soon arranged, and the court summoned Luther to appear before it in person within sixty days.

Luther was at Wittemberg, quietly awaiting the good effects which he imagined his submissive letter to the Pope was calculated to produce, when, on the 7th August, two days only after the letters from Frederic and Maximilian had been despatched to Rome, he received the summons from the Papal tribunal. "At the moment that I looked for benediction," said he, "I saw the thunderbolt descend upon me. I was like the lamb that troubled the stream at which the wolf was drinking. Tetzel escaped, and I was to be devoured."

This summons threw all Wittemberg into consternation, for, whatever course Luther might take, he could not escape danger. If he went to Rome, he would become the victim of his enemies. If he refused to appear, he would, as was usual, be condemned for contumacy, and would not escape, for it was known that the Legate had received from the Pope an order to strain every nerve to excite the Emperor and the German princes against Lu-

* L. Opp. lat. xvii. p. 169.

ther. His friends were alarmed. Shall the preacher of the truth go and risk his life "in that great city, drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus?" Shall every man who ventures to lift his head in the midst of the enslaved nations of Christendom be, on that account, struck down? Shall this man also be trampled under foot, who seemed formed to resist a power which nothing had previously been able to withstand? Luther himself could see no one but the Elector able to save him; but he preferred death to endangering his prince's safety. His friends at last agreed on an expedient which would not compromise Frederic. Let him refuse Luther a safe-conduct: the latter would then have a fair excuse for not appearing at Rome.

On the 8th of August, Luther wrote to Spalatin to ask him to use his influence with the Elector, to have his cause heard in Germany. "See," said he, writing to Staupitz, "what snares they lay for me, and how I am surrounded by thorns. But Christ lives and reigns, the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. My conscience tells me that I have taught the truth, though truth appears still more odious because I teach it. The Church is the womb of Rebecca. The children must struggle together, even to the endangering of the mother's life.* As to the rest, pray the Lord that I may not take too much joy in the trial. May God not lay this sin to their charge!"

The friends of Luther did not confine themselves to consultations and complaints. Spalatin wrote,

* Uterus Rebeccæ est: parvulos in eo collidi necesse est, etiam usque ad periculum matris. (L. Epp. i. p. 138.)

on the part of the Elector, to Renner, the Emperor's secretary: "Doctor Martin will willingly submit himself to the judgment of any of the universities of Germany, except Erfurth, Leipzic, and Frankfort on the Oder, which have forfeited their claim to be regarded as impartial. It is out of his power to appear at Rome in person."*

The members of the university of Wittemberg addressed an intercessory letter to the Pope himself. "His weak health," they said, speaking of Luther, "and the dangers of the journey, make it difficult, and even impossible, that he should obey the order of your Holiness. His distress and his entreaties incline us to compassionate him. We beseech you then, most Holy Father, as obedient children, to look upon him in the light of one who has never been tainted by any doctrines opposed to the tenets of the Romish Church."

The university, in its solicitude, addressed another letter the same day, to Charles von Miltitz, a Saxon gentleman, who was chamberlain to the Pope, and was much esteemed by him. In this letter they gave a more decided testimony in favour of Luther, than they had dared to do in the former. "The reverend father, Martin Luther, the Augustine," said they, "is the noblest and most distinguished member of our university. For several years, we have been witnesses of his talent, his learning, his intimate acquaintance with arts and literature, his irreproachable morals, and his truly christian deportment."†—This strong sympathy of

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 173.

† L. Opp. (lat.) i. 183, 184. L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 171, 172.

those about him is one of the greatest proofs of Luther's worth.

Whilst the result of this application was anxiously awaited, it was settled with less difficulty than might have been expected. The Legate de Vio, mortified at his failure in the commission he had received to excite a general war against the Turks, wished to give importance to his embassy into Germany by some other distinguished service. He thought that if he were to extirpate heresy he should return to Rome with honour. He therefore petitioned the Pope to put this affair into his hands. Leo, on his part, was well disposed towards Frederic, for having so firmly resisted the election of Charles. He felt that he might again have need of his assistance. Without further reference to the former summons, he commissioned his Legate, by a brief, dated the 23d of August, to investigate the affair in Germany. The Pope conceded nothing by consenting to this mode of proceeding, and in case Luther should be prevailed on to retract, the publicity and scandal that must have attended his appearance at Rome would be avoided.

"We charge you," said the Pope, "to compel the aforesaid Luther to appear before you in person; to prosecute and reduce him to submission without delay, as soon as you shall have received this our order; he having already been declared a heretic by our dear brother Jerome, bishop of Asculan."*

"For this purpose," said he, "invoke the power and assistance of our very dear son in Christ, Maxi-

* Dictum Lutherum hæreticum per prædictum auditorem jani declaratum. (Breve Leonis ad Thomam.)

milian, and the other princes of Germany, and of all the communities, universities, and potentates, whether ecclesiastical or secular. And when you have secured his person, cause him to be detained in safe custody, that he may be brought before us."*

We see that this indulgent concession of the Pope, was little else than an expedient for dragging Luther to Rome. Then follows the milder alternative.

"If he should return to a sense of his duty, and ask pardon for so great an offence, freely and of his own accord, we give you power to receive him into the unity of holy mother Church."

The Pope soon returns to his maledictions.

"If he should persist in his stubbornness, and you fail to get possession of his person, we give you power to proscribe him in all places in Germany; to put away, curse, and excommunicate all those who are attached to him, and to enjoin all Christians to shun their society."

Even this is not enough.

"And to the end," he continues, "that this pestilence may the more easily be rooted out, you will excommunicate all the prelates, religious orders, universities, communities, counts, dukes, and potentates, the Emperor Maximilian excepted, who shall neglect to seize the said Martin Luther, and his adherents, and send them to you under proper and safe custody. And if, (which God forbid,) the aforesaid princes, communities, universities, and potentates, or any one belonging to them, shelter

* Brachio cogas atque compellas, et eo in potestate tuâ redacto eum sub fideli custodiâ retineas, ut coram nobis sistatur. (Breve Leonis ad Thomam)

the said Martin and his adherents, or give him publicly or secretly, directly or indirectly, assistance and advice, we lay an interdict on these princes, communities, universities, and potentates, with their towns, boroughs, countries, and villages, as well as on the towns, boroughs, countries, and villages where the said Martin shall take refuge, as long as he shall remain there, and three days after he shall have quitted the same."

This audacious power, which affects to be the earthly representative of him who said: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,"— continues its anathemas; and, after having pronounced penalties against ecclesiastics offending, thus proceeds:

"As to the laity, if they do not obey your orders, without any delay or demur, we declare them reprobate, (excepting always his Imperial Majesty,) unable to perform any lawful act, disentitled to christian burial, and deprived of all fiefs which they may hold, either from the apostolic see, or from any lord whatever."*

Such was the treatment that awaited Luther. The Roman despot had prepared every thing to crush him. He had set every engine at work; even the quiet of the grave must be invaded. His ruin seemed inevitable. How could he escape this powerful combination? But Rome had miscalculated; the movement excited by the Spirit of God could not be quelled by the decrees of its chancery.

* Infamiæ et inhabilitatis ad omnes actus legitimos, ecclesiasticæ sepulturæ, privationis quoque feudorum. (Breve Leonis ad Thomam.)

Even the semblance of a just and impartial enquiry had been disregarded; and Luther had already been declared an heretic, not only before he had been heard, but even long before the expiration of the time allowed for his personally appearing. The passions, (and never are they more strongly excited than in religious discussions,) break through all forms of justice. Not only in the Roman church, but in those Protestant churches which have departed from the Gospel, and in every place where truth has been forsaken, do we find it treated in this way. All means seem good against the Gospel. We frequently see men, who, in any other case, would shrink from committing the least injustice, not hesitating to trample under foot all rule and equity, when Christianity, or her witnesses, are concerned.

When Luther eventually came to the knowledge of this brief, he gave free expression to his indignation. "The most remarkable part of the transaction is this," said he; "the brief was issued the 23rd of August; I was summoned the 7th of August; so that between the summons and the brief sixteen days had elapsed. Now, make the calculation, and you will find that my Lord Jerome, bishop of Asculan, proceeded against me, pronounced judgment, condemned me, and declared me a heretic, before the summons reached me, or, at the most, within sixteen days after it had been forwarded to me. Now, I ask what becomes of the sixty days that are granted me in the summons itself. They began the 7th of August—they would expire the 7th of October. . . . Is this the style and manner of the Roman Court, that in the same day she sum-

mons, exhorts, accuses, judges, condemns, and declares guilty, and this, too, in the case of one who is at such a distance from Rome, and who can have no knowledge of what is going on? What answer can they make to all this? They certainly forgot to clear their brains with hellebore, before they had recourse to such clumsy artifice."*

But at the same time that Rome was arming the legate with her thunders, she was endeavouring, by soft and flattering speeches, to detach from Luther's interest the prince whose power she most dreaded. The same day, (the 23rd of August, 1518,) the Pope wrote to the Elector of Saxony. He had recourse to the same practised policy which we have before noticed, and sought to flatter the Prince's vanity.

"Dear Son," said the Roman Pontiff, "when we think of your noble and worthy family; of you, who are its ornament and head; when we remember how you and your ancestors have always wished to uphold the Christian faith and the honour and dignity of the Holy See, we cannot believe that a man who abandons the faith can rely on your Highness's favour, and recklessly give the rein to his wickedness. And yet reports have reached us from all quarters, that a certain brother, Martin Luther, a monk of the order of St. Augustine, acting the part of a child of iniquity and a despiser of God, has forgotten his habit and his order, which require humility and obedience, and boasts that he fears neither the authority nor the chastisement of any man, assured, as he declares himself, of your favour and protection.

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 176.

"But, as we are sure that he is, in this, deceiving himself, we have thought it good to write to your Highness, and to exhort you, according to the will of God, to be jealous of your honour as a Christian prince, the ornament, the glory, and the sweet savour of your noble family,—to defend yourself from these calumnies,—and to clear yourself, not only from the commission of so great a crime as that which is imputed to you,* but also from the very suspicion which the rash presumption of this monk tends to bring upon you."

Leo, at the same time, intimated to Frederic that he had commissioned the Cardinal of St. Sixtus to examine into the affair, and he desired him to deliver up Luther into the hands of the Legate, "lest," added he, recurring to his favourite argument, "pious people of this or after times should one day lament and say: The most dangerous heresy that ever afflicted the Church of God, arose through the assistance, and under the protection, of that noble and worthy family."*

Thus Rome had taken her measures. To one party she offered the intoxicating incense of flattery; for the other she reserved her vengeance and her terrors.

All earthly powers,—emperor, pope, princes, and legates,—were put in motion against the humble friar of Erfurth, whose inward conflicts we have already traced. "The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel against the Lord, and against his anointed."

Before this letter and brief had yet reached

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 173.

Germany, and while Luther was still fearing that he should be obliged to appear at Rome, a fortunate circumstance occurred to comfort his heart. He needed a friend into whose bosom he could pour out his sorrows, and whose faithful love should comfort him in his hours of dejection. God sent him such a friend in Melancthon.

George Schwarzerd was a skilful master-armourer of Bretten, a small town in the Palatinate. On the 14th of February, 1497, a son was born to him, whom he named Philip, and who, afterwards, became celebrated under the name of Melancthon. George, who enjoyed the esteem of the princes of the Palatinate, of Bavaria, and of Saxony, was remarkable for the perfect uprightness of his dealings. Often did he refuse to take from purchasers the price they offered; and, if he knew that they were poor, he obliged them to take back their money. He regularly rose at midnight, and offered a prayer upon his knees. If he ever happened to omit this service, he was dissatisfied with himself all day. Schwarzerd's wife, whose name was Barbara, was the daughter of a respectable magistrate, John Reuter. She was of an affectionate disposition, somewhat inclined to superstition, but very discreet and prudent. Some old and well-known German rhymes are ascribed to her pen. We give their sense as well as we are able:

Gifts to the poor impoverish none,
To church to pray will hinder none,
To grease the wheel delayeth none,
Ill-gotten wealth enricheth none,
God's holy book deludeth none.

Also the following:

He who is a freer spender
Than his plough or toil can render,
Sure of ruin, slow or fast,
May perhaps be hanged at last.*

Philip was not eleven years old when his father died. Two days before his death, George summoned his son to his bedside, and exhorted him to "set the Lord always before him." "I foresee," said the dying man, "that stormy times are at hand. I have witnessed great things; but there are greater still in preparation. God preserve, and guide you, my son!" After receiving his father's blessing, Philip was sent to Spire, that he might not be present at his father's death. He wept bitterly on taking his departure.

Reuter, the worthy bailiff, Philip's grandfather, who had a young son of his own, performed a father's part towards the orphan. He took both Philip and his brother George into his own house, and, shortly after, engaged John Hungarus as tutor to the three boys. Hungarus was an excellent man, and afterwards preached the Gospel with great effect, continuing his labours to an advanced age. He never overlooked any fault in the young man, but punished it with discretion: "It was thus," said Melancthon, in 1554, "that he made me a grammarian. He loved me as if I had been his son; I loved him as a father; and I trust we shall meet in heaven."†

Philip was remarkable for the excellence of his

* Almosen geben armt nicht, &c. Wer mehr will verzehren, etc. (Müller's Reliquien.)

† Dilexit me ut filium, et ego eum ut patrem; et conveniemus, spero, in vitâ æternâ. (Melancth. Expl. Evang.)

understanding, his quickness in acquiring, and his talent for communicating knowledge. He could never be idle, but was always seeking for some one with whom he might discuss the things he had heard.* It often happened, that learned foreigners passed through Bretten, and visited Reuter. On such occasions, the bailiff's grandson immediately accosted them, engaged them in conversation, and pressed them so closely on the subjects discussed, that by-standers were astonished.

To a powerful genius he united great sweetness of disposition, and thus gained the favour of all who knew him. He had an impediment in his speech; but, following the example of the illustrious Grecian orator, he laboured with so much perseverance to overcome this defect, that in after life no traces of it were perceptible.

On the death of his grandfather, young Philip was sent with his brother and his uncle John to the school of Pforzheim. The young boys lodged with one of their female relations, who was sister to the celebrated Reuchlin. Thirsting for knowledge, Philip, under the tuition of George Simler, made rapid progress in learning, and especially in the Greek language, to which he was passionately devoted. Reuchlin often visited Pforzheim. At his sister's house he became acquainted with her young inmates, and was very much struck with Philip's answers. He presented him with a Greek grammar and a Bible. These two books were destined to be the study of his whole life.

* Quiescere non poterat, sed quærebat ubique aliquem cum quo de auditis disputaret. (Camerarius, Vita Melancth. p. 7.)

When Reuchlin returned from his second journey into Italy, his young relation, who was then twelve years old, celebrated the day of his arrival by acting in his presence, with some friends, a Latin comedy of his own composing. Reuchlin, delighted with the young man's talent, tenderly embraced him, called him his beloved son, and, smiling, placed upon his head the red hat he had received when he was made doctor. It was at this time that Reuchlin changed his name of Schwarzerd for that of Melancthon. Both words signify *black earth*, the one in the German, the other in Greek. Most of the learned men of those times translated their names into Greek or Latin,

At twelve years of age Melancthon went to the university of Heidelberg. It was there he began to slake his thirst for knowledge. At fourteen he was made bachelor. In 1512, Reuchlin invited him to Tubingen, where many eminent scholars were assembled. He attended the lectures of the theologians, the physicians, and the jurisconsults. There was no kind of knowledge that he deemed unworthy of pursuit. He sought not for fame, but for the possession and advantage of learning.

Holy Scripture especially engaged his attention. Those who frequented the church of Tubingen had remarked that he had frequently a book in his hand, which he read between the services. The mysterious volume seemed larger than the ordinary mass books: and a report was circulated that Philip on such occasions read some profane author. But it turned out that the suspected book was a copy of the Holy Scriptures, recently printed at Bâle by

John Frobenius. He continued to use this book all his life, with the most diligent attention. He always carried about him this precious volume, taking it with him to the various public assemblies which he was called on to attend.* Rejecting the vain systems of the schoolmen, he adhered to the plain word of God. Erasmus, writing at that time to Œcolampadius, thus expresses himself: "I have the highest opinion and the most brilliant expectations of Melancthon. May our Lord so order events, that he may long survive us! He will altogether eclipse Erasmus."†

Nevertheless, Melancthon then partook of the errors of his time. "I shudder," said he, at an advanced period of his life, "when I think of the superstitious respect I paid to images, while I was yet a Papist."‡

In 1514, he was made Doctor of Philosophy, and began to lecture publicly. He was then seventeen. The grace and charm which he communicated to his instructions formed a striking contrast to the tasteless method then followed by the doctors, and especially by the monks. He took an active part in the contest in which Reuchlin was engaged with the ignoramuses of his time. Agreeable in conversation, gentle and graceful in manners, and beloved by all who knew him, he soon acquired great authority and established reputation among the learned.

* Camerar. Vita Philip. Melancthonis, p. 16.

† Erasmi Epist. i. p. 405.

‡ Horresco quando cogito quomodo ipse accesserim ad statuas in papatu. (Explicat. Evang.)

It was at this time that the Elector Frederic formed the design of inviting some man of distinguished learning to become professor of the ancient languages in his university in Wittemberg. He applied to Reuchlin, who recommended Melancthon. Frederic foresaw the celebrity that the young Grecian would confer on an institution so dear to him—and Reuchlin, overjoyed at so favourable an opening for his young friend, wrote to him in the words of the Lord to Abraham: "Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and I will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." "Yes," continued the old man, "I trust it will be thus with thee, my dear Philip, my disciple and my joy."* Melancthon acknowledged the voice of God in this summons. All the university grieved at his departure: yet were there some who envied and hated him. He bade farewell to his native place, exclaiming, "The will of the Lord be done!" He was then one-and-twenty.

Melancthon performed the journey on horseback in company with some Saxon merchants, as in the desert the traveller joins a caravan: for, as Reuchlin says, "he knew neither the roads nor the towns they had to pass through."† At Augsburg he waited on the Elector, who was stopping there. At Nuremberg he made acquaintance with the excellent Pirckheimer, and at Leipzig with the learned Grecian, Mosellanus. The university of this latter city

* Meum opus et meum solatium. (Corp. Ref. i. 33.)

† Das Wegs und der Orte unbekannt (ib. 30.)

gave a feast in his honour. The repast was truly academical. A variety of dishes were introduced in succession, and as each was put upon the table, one of the professors rose and addressed a studied Latin speech to Melancthon. The latter answered *impromptu*. At last, tired of so much eloquence, he said: "My learned friends, suffer me to answer once for all to your orations; for, being entirely unprepared, I am unable to infuse into my replies so much variety as you have introduced in your addresses." After this the dishes were brought in without the accompanying orations.*

Melancthon arrived at Wittemberg on the 25th of August, 1518, two days after Leo X. had signed the brief addressed to Cajetan, and the letter to the Elector.

The professors of Wittemberg did not receive Melancthon so graciously as those of Leipzig had done. Their first impression of him did not answer the expectation they had formed. They beheld a young man, who looked even younger than he really was, of small stature, and of a shy and timid demeanour. Is this the famous Doctor, thought they, that the great men of our day, such as Erasmus and Reuchlin, so highly extol? . . . . Neither Luther, to whom he first introduced himself, nor Luther's colleagues, conceived any great hopes of him, when they remarked his youth, his diffidence, and his retiring manners.

On the 29th of August, being four days after his arrival, he delivered his inaugural discourse. The

* Camer. Vita Mel. 26.

whole university was convened on the occasion. The lad,* as Luther calls him, spoke such elegant Latin, and manifested so much learning, so cultivated an understanding, and such sound judgment, that all his auditors were astonished.

When he had concluded his speech, all crowded around him to offer their congratulations; but no one felt more delighted than Luther. He hastened to communicate to his friends the sentiments of his heart. "Melancthon," said he, writing to Spalatin on the 31st of August, "delivered, only four days after his arrival, so beautiful and learned an oration that it was heard by all with approbation and astonishment. We soon got over the prejudices we had conceived from his personal appearance; we now extol and admire his eloquence. We thank the prince and yourself for the service you have done us. I can wish for no better Greek master. But I fear that our poor fare will not suit his delicate frame, and that we shall not keep him long with us, on account of the smallness of his allowance. I hear that the people of Leipzig are already bragging that they will be able to carry him off from us. Beware, my dear Spalatin, of despising this youth. The young man is worthy of the highest honour."†

Melancthon began at once to expound Homer and St. Paul's Epistle to Titus. He was full of ardour. "I will use every endeavour," he wrote to Spalatin, "to win the favour of those at Wittemberg,

* Puer et adolescentulus, si ætatem consideres. (L. Epp. i. 141.)

† L. Epp. i. 135.

who love learning and virtue." Four days after his inauguration, Luther again wrote to Spalatin:

"I commend to your especial regard that very learned and amiable Grecian, Philip. His lecture room is always crowded. All the theologians, especially, attend his lectures. He puts them all, whether they be in the upper, the lower, or the middle classes, upon learning Greek."*

Melancthon, on his part, felt he could return Luther's affection. He soon discerned in him a kindness of disposition, a strength of mind, a courage, and a wisdom, which till then he had never found in any man. He revered and loved him. "If there be any one," said he, "that I love and embrace with my whole heart, it is Martin Luther."†

With such feelings did Luther and Melancthon meet; and their friendship continued till death. We cannot sufficiently admire the goodness and wisdom of God, in bringing together two men so different, and yet so necessary to each other. Melancthon was as remarkable for calmness, prudence, and gentleness, as Luther was for wisdom, impetuosity, and energy. Luther communicated vigour to Melancthon:—Melancthon moderated Luther. They were like positive and negative agents in electricity, by whose reciprocal action an equilibrium is maintained. If Melancthon had not been at Luther's side, the torrent might have overflowed

* Summos cum mediis et infimis studiosos facit græcitatis. (L. Epp. i. 140.)

† Martinum, si omnino in rebus humanis quidquam, vehementissimè diligo, et animo integerrimo complector. (Mel. Epp. i. 411.)

its banks:—when Luther was not by, Melancthon faltered, and gave way even where he ought not.*—Luther did much by *power*:—Melancthon did no less, perhaps, by following a slower and gentler method. Both were upright, open-hearted, and generous; both, full of love for the word of eternal life, proclaimed it with a fidelity and devotion which governed their whole lives.

Melancthon's appearance wrought a revolution, not merely in Wittemberg, but throughout Germany and the learned world. The study he had applied to the Greek and Latin classics and to philosophy had given an order, clearness, and precision to his ideas which diffused on the subjects he handled a new light and an indescribable beauty. The sweet spirit of the Gospel fertilized and animated all his reflections; and in his lectures the driest sciences appeared clothed with a grace that charmed all hearers. The sterility that the scholastic philosophy had spread over instruction was gone, a new method of teaching and of study was introduced by Melancthon. "Thanks to him," says a distinguished historian of Germany,† "Wittemberg became the school of the nation."

The impulse that Melancthon gave to Luther in his work of translating the Bible, is one of the most memorable circumstances of the friendship between these great men. As early as 1517, Luther had made some attempts towards that translation. He

* Calvin, writing to Sleidan, observes: "Dominus eum fortiore spiritu instruat, ne gravem ex ejus timiditate jacturam sentiat posteritas."

† Plank.

got together as many Greek and Latin books as he could collect. With the aid of his dear Philip, his labour now proceeded with fresh energy. Luther obliged Melancthon to take part in his researches, consulted him in difficult passages; and the work, which was destined to be one of the grandest works of the Reformer, advanced more securely and rapidly to its completion.

Doubtless, the arrival of Melancthon at so critical a moment, brought with it a sweet relaxation to the mind of Luther. Doubtless, in the delightful expansion of a new friendship, and in the midst of the Biblical studies to which he applied himself with fresh zeal, he sometimes altogether forgot Rome, Prierias, Leo, and that ecclesiastical court before which he was to appear. Yet these were brief moments that soon passed away. His thoughts were ever reverting to the awful tribunal before which he was cited by the influence of his implacable enemies. With what terror would not the thought have filled a soul desiring aught but the triumph of truth! But Luther did not tremble in the prospect of it: full of trust in the faithfulness and power of God, he remained firm; and was ready to expose himself alone to the wrath of enemies more terrible than those who had brought Huss to the stake.

A few days after the arrival of Melancthon, and before the decision of the Pope, which removed the citation of Luther from Rome to Augsburg, could be known, Luther wrote thus to Spalatin:—"I do not ask our sovereign to do the least thing in defence

of my theses;—I am willing to be delivered up, and cast alone into the hands of all my adversaries. Let him suffer the storm to exhaust all its rage on me. What I have undertaken to defend, I hope I shall, by Christ's help, be enabled to maintain. As to *force*, we must needs yield to that, but without forsaking the truth."*

Luther's courage communicated itself to others. The gentlest and most timid, beholding the danger that threatened the witness of the truth, found language full of energy and indignation. The prudent and pacific Staupitz wrote to Spalatin on the 7th September: "Do not cease to exhort the Prince, our master, not to be dismayed by the roaring of the lions. Let the Prince make a stand for the truth, without regarding Luther or Staupitz, or the order. Let there be at least one place where we may speak freely and fearlessly. I know that the plague of Babylon (I had almost said, of Rome) is let loose against all who attack the corruptions of those who betray Christ for gain. I, myself, have seen a preacher of the truth pulled out of his pulpit, and, though on a saint's day, bound and dragged to prison. Others have witnessed still greater atrocities. Therefore, my dearly beloved, persuade his Highness to continue in his present sentiments."†

The order for his appearance at Augsburg, before the cardinal legate, at length arrived. It was now with one of the princes of the Roman Church that Luther had to do. All his friends besought

* L. Epp. i. 139. † Jen. Aug. i. p. 384.

him not to set out.* They feared that a snare might be laid for him on his journey, or a design formed against his life. Some set about finding a place of concealment for him. Staupitz himself, the timid Staupitz, was moved at the thought of the danger which threatened that brother Martin whom he had drawn forth from the obscurity of the cloister, and launched upon the agitated sea where his life was now in peril. Ah! would it not have been better for that poor brother to have remained all his life unknown? It is too late now. Yet he will do all in his power to save him. Accordingly he wrote to him from his convent at Salzburg, on the 15th September, imploring him to flee and take refuge with him. "It seems to me," said he, "that the whole world is up in arms, and combined against the truth. Even so was the crucified Jesus hated! I see not that you have anything else to expect than persecution. Ere long, no one, without the Pope's permission, will be allowed to search the Scriptures, and to learn Christ from them, which yet is Christ's injunction. Your friends are few in number. God grant to those few friends courage to declare themselves in opposition to your formidable enemies! Your most prudent course is to leave Wittemberg for a time, and come and reside with me. Then—let us live and die together. This is also the Prince's opinion," adds Staupitz.†

From different quarters Luther received alarm-

* (Contra omnium amicorum consilium comparui.)

† Epp. i. 61.

ing information. Count Albert of Mansfeldt sent him a message to abstain from setting out, because some great nobles had bound themselves by an oath, to seize and strangle, or drown him.* But nothing could shake his resolution. He would not listen to the Vicar-general's offer.—He will not go and hide in the convent of Salzburg:—he will continue faithfully on that stormy stage where the hand of God has placed him. It is by perseverance in the midst of opposers, by loudly proclaiming the truth in the midst of the world, that the kingdom of the truth is advanced. Why then should he flee? He is not of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of their souls. That word of the Master, whom he is resolved to serve and love continually, resounds in his heart: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." Everywhere, in the history of Luther, and of the Reformation, do we find ourselves in presence of that intrepid spirit, that elevated morality, that boundless charity, which the first establishment of Christianity had exhibited to the world. "I am like Jeremiah," said Luther, at the moment we are speaking of,—"'a man of strife and contention;' but the more they increase their threatenings, the more they multiply my joy. My wife and children are well provided for. My lands and houses and all my goods are safe.† They have already torn to

* Ut vel stranguler, vel baptizer ad mortem. (L. Epp. i. 120.)

† Uxor mea et liberi mei provisi sunt. (Ibid. 129.)—He had none.

pieces my honour and my good name. All I have left is my wretched body;—let them have it;—they will then shorten my life by a few hours. But as to my soul,—they shall not have that. He, who resolves to bear the word of Christ to the world, must expect death every hour;—for our spouse is a bloody husband unto us."*

The Elector was then at Augsburg. Shortly before he left that city and the Diet, he pledged himself to the Legate, that Luther should appear before him. Spalatin wrote to his friend, by direction of the Prince, that the Pope had named a commission to hear him in Germany; that the Elector would not suffer him to be carried to Rome;—and desired him to prepare to set out for Augsburg. Luther resolved to obey. The information he had received from Count Mansfeldt induced him to ask Frederic for a safe-conduct. The latter replied, that it was not needed, and sent him only letters of recommendation to several of the most distinguished counsellors of Augsburg. He, at the same time, forwarded some money for his journey, and the Reformer, poor and unprotected, set forth on foot, to place himself in the power of his adversaries.†

With what feelings must he have quitted Wittemberg, and directed his steps towards Augsburg, where the Pope's legate awaited him! The object of his journey was not like that to Heidelberg,—a

* Sic enim sponsus noster sponsus sanguinum nobis est. (Ibid. see Exodus, iv. 25.)

† Veni igitur pedester et pauper Augustam. . . . (L. Opp. lat. in præf.)

friendly meeting;—he was about to appear, without any safe-conduct, before the delegate of Rome; perhaps he was going to meet death. But his faith was not in word, it was in truth. Therefore it was that it gave him *peace;* and he advanced without fear, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, to bear his testimony to the Gospel.

He reached Weimar on the 28th of September, and took up his lodging in the convent of the Cordeliers. One of the monks could not take his eyes off him. This was Myconius. It was the first time he had seen Luther. He wished to approach him, and whisper that he owed to him the peace of his soul, and that all his desire was to labour with him. But Myconius was closely watched by his superiors, and was not permitted to speak to Luther.*

The Elector of Saxony then held his court at Weimar, and it is probable that, on that account, the Cordeliers received the Doctor. The day after his arrival was the festival of St. Michael:—Luther said mass, and was even invited to preach in the Castle Chapel. It was a mark of favour that his Prince took pleasure in conferring upon him. He preached from an overflowing heart, in the presence of the court, on the text of the day, which is in Matthew's Gospel, ch. xviii. verses 1 to 11. He spoke strongly against hypocrites, and such as boast of their own righteousness. But he said not a word

* Ibi Myconius primum vidit Lutherum: sed ab accessu et colloquio ejus tunc est prohibitus. (M. Adami Vita Myconii, p. 176.)

of the angels, though it was the invariable custom to do so on St. Michael's day.

The courage of the Doctor, who was repairing quietly on foot to attend a summons, which, for so many before him, had been a summons to die, astonished those who beheld him. Interest, wonder, and compassion successively took possession of their hearts. John Kestner, provisor of the Cordeliers, struck with apprehension at the thought of the dangers that awaited his guest, said: "My brother, you have to meet Italians at Augsburg. They are shrewd people, subtle antagonists, and will give you enough to do. I fear you will not be able to defend your cause against them. They will cast you into the fire, and the flames will consume you."* Luther answered gravely: "My dear friend, pray to our Lord God, who is in heaven, and put up a pater noster for me and for his dear child Jesus, whose cause is mine,—that he may be favourable to *him*. If He maintains his cause, mine is safe; but if He will not maintain it, certainly it is not in me to maintain it; and it is He who will bear the dishonour."

Luther continued his journey on foot, and arrived at Nuremberg. Being about to present himself before a prince of the church, he wished to make a suitable appearance. The dress he wore was old, and much the worse for his journey. He therefore borrowed a monk's frock of his faithful friend Wenceslas Link, the preacher at Nuremberg.

* Profectò in ignem te conjicient, et flammis exurent. (Melch. Adam. Vita Myconii, p. 176, Myconius, Ref. Hist. p. 30.)

Doubtless Luther did not call on Link alone, but visited his other friends at Nuremberg, and among them Scheurl, the town-clerk, Albert Durer, the celebrated painter, (to whose memory that town is at this time erecting a statue,) and others. He was confirmed in his resolution by his intercourse with these excellent ones of the earth, whilst many monks as well as laity caught the alarm at his journey, and besought him to turn back. The letters he wrote from this town breathe the spirit which then animated him: "I find," said he, "men of cowardly spirit, who wish to persuade me not to go to Augsburg; but I am determined to go on. May the Lord's will be done! Even at Augsburg, and in the midst of his enemies, Christ reigns. Let Christ be exalted, and the death of Luther or any other sinner, is of little moment. As it is written; 'may the God of my salvation be exalted!' Farewell! persevere, stand fast, for we must be rejected either by men or by God: but God is true, and man is a liar."*

Link and Leonard, an Augustine monk, could not bear to let Luther encounter alone the dangers that threatened him. They knew his disposition, and that, overflowing as he was with self-devotion and courage, he would probably be wanting in prudence. They therefore accompanied him. When they were within five leagues of Augsburg, Luther, who was no doubt suffering from the fatigue of his journey, and

* Vivat Christus; moriatur Martinus .... (Weismanni, Hist. Sacr. Novi Test. p. 1465.) Weismann had read this letter in manuscript. It is not in the collection of M. de Wette.

the agitation of his mind, was seized with violent pains in the stomach. He thought he should die. His two friends, much alarmed, engaged a waggon. They arrived at Augsburg in the evening of Friday, the 7th of October, and alighted at the convent of the Augustines. Luther was much exhausted; but he rapidly recovered; and doubtless his faith and the vivacity of his mind greatly conduced to his restoration to health.

Immediately on his arrival, and before he had even seen any one, Luther, desiring to show every mark of respect to the Legate, begged Wenceslas Link to go to his house, to announce that he was in Augsburg. Link did so, and respectfully intimated to the Cardinal, on behalf of the Doctor of Wittemberg, that the latter was ready to appear before him whenever he should require his attendance. De Vio was rejoiced at this intelligence. At length, then, he had the hot-headed heretic in his power; he inwardly resolved that he should not leave Augsburg as he had entered it. At the same time that Link waited upon the Legate, the monk Leonard went to announce to Staupitz Luther's arrival at Augsburg. The Vicar-general had previously written to the Doctor, to say he would certainly visit him as soon as he arrived. Luther lost no time in informing him of his presence.*

The Diet was over. The Emperor and the Electors had already left the place. The Emperor, it is true, had not finally taken his departure, but was hunting in the environs. The representative

* L. Epp. i. p. 144.

of Rome alone remained at Augsburg. Had Luther arrived whilst the Diet was sitting, he would have met powerful friends; but everything now seemed likely to yield before the papal authority.

The judge before whom Luther was to appear was not of a character to calm his apprehensions. Thomas de Vio, who was surnamed Cajetan from the town of Gaeta, in the kingdom of Naples, where he was born (1469), was one of whom great expectations had been entertained from his youth. At sixteen he had entered into the order of the Dominicans, contrary to the express wish of his parents. He had afterwards become general of his order, and cardinal of the church of Rome. But what boded ill to Luther, the learned Doctor was one of the most zealous advocates of that scholastic theology which the Reformer had so severely handled. His learning, the austerity of his disposition, and the purity of his morals, ensured to him an influence and authority in Germany, which other Roman courtiers would not easily have acquired. It was to his reputation for sanctity, no doubt, that he owed his appointment. Rome had calculated that this would admirably serve her purposes. Thus even the good qualities of Cajetan made him still more formidable. Besides, the affair entrusted to him was by no means a complicated one. Luther was already declared a heretic. If he would not retract, the Legate's duty must be to send him to prison; and, if he escaped, to visit with excommunication such as should dare to receive him. This was the course which the dignitary before whom Luther

was cited was authorized to take on behalf of Rome.*

The Reformer had recruited his strength by a night's rest. On the morning of Saturday, the 8th of October, he began to reflect on his strange situation. He was resigned, and was patiently waiting till God's will should be manifested by the progress of events; he did not wait long. A person, unknown to him, sent him word, as if entirely devoted to his service, that he was coming to visit him, advising him to avoid appearing before the Legate till he had seen him. The message came from an Italian courtier, named Urban de Serra Longa, who had often visited Germany as envoy from the Margrave of Montferrat. He had known the Elector of Saxony, at whose court he had been accredited, and after the Margrave's death, had attached himself to the Cardinal de Vio.

The art and address of this courtier presented the most striking contrast to the noble frankness, and generous integrity of Luther. The Italian soon arrived at the monastery of the Augustines. The Cardinal had sent him to sound the Reformer, and to prepare him for the recantation expected from him. Serra Longa imagined that his long residence in Germany gave him an advantage over the other courtiers of the Legate's train; he expected to make short work with this German monk. He arrived, attended by two servants, and professed to have come of his own accord, from friendship for a favourite of the Elector of Saxony, and out of love to the Church. After having saluted Luther

* The Pope's Bull. (L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 174.)

with many professions, the diplomatist added, in a tone of affection:

"I am come to offer you prudent and good advice. Make your peace with the church. Submit unreservedly to the Cardinal. Retract your calumnies. Recollect the abbot Joachim of Florence: he, as you know, had put forth heresies, and yet he was afterwards declared no heretic, because he retracted his errors."

Luther intimated his intention of standing upon his defence.

SERRA LONGA.—"Beware of that. Would you presume to enter the lists with the Legate of his Holiness?"

LUTHER.—"If they can prove to me that I have taught any thing contrary to the Romish Church, I will be my own judge, and immediately retract. But the main point is, to ascertain whether the Legate relies more on the authority of St. Thomas than the faith will sanction. If he does, I shall certainly not submit to him."

SERRA LONGA.—"Oh, oh! you intend, then, to offer him battle!"

Upon this the Italian began to use language which Luther designates as horrible. He asserted that one might maintain false propositions, if they only brought in money and filled the strong box; that all discussion in the universities concerning the Pope's authority was to be avoided; but that, on the contrary, it was sound doctrine that the Pontiff might,* by a nod, alter or suppress articles of

* Et nutu solo omnia abrogare, etiam ea quæ fidei essent. (L. Epp. i. 144.)

faith;—with much more in the same strain. But the crafty Italian soon perceived that he was forgetting himself; he resumed his former gentleness, and endeavoured to persuade Luther to submit to the Legate in every thing, and to retract his doctrine, his theses, and the oaths he had taken.

The Doctor, who at first had given some credit to the fair professions of the orator Urban, (as he calls him in his narrative), began to suspect that they were very hollow, and that he was much more in the interest of the Legate than in his. He therefore spoke with rather more reserve, and contented himself with saying that he was quite ready to be humble and obedient, and to give satisfaction in any point in which he might be shewn to be in error. At these words Serra Longa exclaimed, exultingly, "I will go directly to the Legate, and you will follow me presently. Every thing will go well, and it will soon be all settled."*

He took his leave, and the Saxon monk, who had more discernment than the Roman courtier, thought within himself: "This crafty Sinon has been poorly trained by his Greeks."† Luther was divided between hope and fear. Yet hope prevailed. The visit of Serra Longa, whom he afterwards calls a foolish meddler,‡ and his strange assertions, aroused his courage.

The different counsellors, and other respectable inhabitants of Augsburg, to whom the Elector had

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 179.

† Hunc Sinonem parum consultè instructum arte pelasgâ. (L. Epp. i. p. 144: see Virgil's Æneid, Book 2.)

‡ Mediator ineptus. (Ibid.)

recommended Luther, were all eager to visit a man whose name already resounded through all Germany. Peutinger, the Imperial counsellor, one of the most distinguished patricians of the city, and who often invited Luther to his table, the counsellor Langemantel, Doctor Auerbach of Leipzig, and the two brothers Adelmann, both canons, with several others repaired to the convent of the Augustines. With cordial friendship they accosted this extraordinary man, who had taken a long journey to deliver himself up to the agents of Rome. "Have you a safe-conduct?" asked they. "No," replied the intrepid monk. "What boldness!" they exclaimed. "This," said Luther, "was a civil phrase to express my fool-hardiness." All joined in entreating him not to go to the Legate without first obtaining a safe-conduct from the Emperor himself. It is probable that something had already transpired concerning the papal brief of which the Legate was the bearer.

"But I came to Augsburg without a safe-conduct," replied Luther, "and I met with no harm."

"The Elector," resumed Langemantel, with affectionate earnestness, "commended you to *our* care; you ought therefore to follow our directions."

Doctor Auerbach added his entreaties to those of Langemantel. "We know," said he, "that the Cardinal is, in his heart, enraged against you to the greatest degree.* We must not trust these Italians."†

* Sciunt enim eum in me exacerbatissimum intus, quicquid simulet foris. . .(L. Epp. i. p. 143.)

† L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 201.

The canon Adelmann spoke to the same effect: "They have sent you without protection," said he, "and they have neglected to provide you with the very thing which you most need."*

His friends took upon themselves to obtain the necessary safe-conduct from the Emperor. They then proceeded to tell Luther how many persons of consequence were favourably disposed toward him. "The French minister himself, who left Augsburg a few days ago, spoke of you most honourably."† This remark struck Luther, and he remembered it afterwards. Thus some of the most remarkable citizens of one of the first cities in the empire were already gained over to the Reformation.

Their conversation had reached this point, when Serra Longa returned:—"Come," said he to Luther, "the Cardinal is waiting for you. I will myself conduct you to him. But first let me tell you how you must appear in his presence. When you enter the room where he is sitting, you must prostrate yourself with your face to the ground; when he tells you to rise, you must kneel before him, and you must not stand erect till he orders you to do so.‡ Remember that it is before a prince of the church you are about to appear. As to the rest, fear nothing; all will soon be settled without any difficulty."

Luther, who had before promised to accompany Serra Longa whenever he should summon him, was embarrassed. However, he did not fail to repeat

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 203. † Seckendorf, p. 144.
‡ Seckendorf, p. 130.

the advice of his Augsburg friends, and said something of a safe-conduct.

"Beware of asking anything of the sort," replied Serra Longa quickly, "you have no need of it whatever. The Legate is well disposed towards you, and quite ready to end the affair amicably. If you ask for a safe-conduct, you will spoil all."*

"My gracious lord, the Elector of Saxony," replied Luther, "recommended me to several honourable men in this town. They advise me not to venture without a safe-conduct: I ought to follow their advice. Were I to neglect it, and any thing should befal me, they would write to the Elector, my master, that I would not hearken to them."

Luther persisted in his resolution; and Serra Longa was obliged to return to his employer, and report to him the failure of his mission, at the very moment when he fancied it would be crowned with success.

Thus ended that day's conferences with the orator of Montferrat.

Luther received another invitation, proceeding from very different motives. John Frosch, prior of the Carmelites, was an old friend. Two years before, he had maintained some theses, as a licentiate in theology, under the superintendence of Luther. He called on him, and pressed him to come and stay with him. He laid claim to the honour of having the Doctor of all Germany as his guest. Already men did not fear to render him homage in the face of Rome; already the weak was become

* L. Opp. (L.) 179.

the stronger. Luther accepted the invitation, and accordingly removed from the convent of the Augustines to that of the Carmelites.

The day did not close without his seriously reflecting on his position. The visit of Serra Longa, and the apprehensions of the counsellors, concurred to convince him of the difficult circumstances in which he stood. Nevertheless, he had God in heaven for his protector, and in His keeping he could sleep in peace.

The next day was Sunday; he obtained a little more rest. However he was obliged to bear another kind of fatigue. Nothing was talked of in the city but Dr. Luther, and all desired to see (as he wrote to Melancthon) "the new Erostratus who had kindled so vast a conflagration." They crowded about him; and the good Doctor, doubtless, smiled at this strange excitement.

But he had also to support another sort of importunity. If there was a general wish to see him, there was a still greater desire to hear him. He was asked on all sides to preach. Luther had no greater joy than to proclaim the Gospel. He would have rejoiced to preach Christ in this great city, and in the solemn circumstances in which he was placed. But on this, as on many occasions, he manifested a most proper feeling of decorum, and much respect for his superiors. He declined to preach, in the fear that the Legate might think he did so to vex and to brave him. This moderation and prudence were assuredly as valuable instruction as a sermon.

However, the Cardinal's agents did not let him rest, but returned to the charge. "The Cardinal," said they, "sends you assurances of his grace and favour: why are you afraid?" And they endeavoured by every possible argument to persuade him to wait upon the Legate. "He is so gracious, that he is like a father," said one of these emissaries. But another, going close up to him, whispered: "Do not believe what they say. There is no dependance to be placed upon his words."* Luther persisted in his resolution.

On the morning of Monday, the 10th of October, Serra Longa again renewed his persuasions. The courtier had made it a point of honour to succeed in his negociation. The moment he entered:

"Why," he asked in Latin, "why do you not go to the Cardinal? He is expecting you in the most indulgent frame of mind. With him the whole question is summed up in six letters,—REVOCA,—*retract.* Come, then, with me, you have nothing to fear."

Luther thought within himself that those were six very important letters; but without further discussion, he replied:

"As soon as I have received the safe-conduct, I will appear."

Serra Longa lost his temper at these words. He persisted—he brought forward additional reasons for compliance. But Luther was immoveable. The Italian courtier, still irritated, exclaimed:

"You imagine, no doubt, that the Elector will

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 205.

take up arms in your favour, and risk, for your sake, the loss of the dominions he inherits from his ancestors."

LUTHER.—"God forbid!"

SERRA LONGA.—"When all forsake you, where will you take refuge?"

LUTHER, *smiling, and looking upwards with the eye of faith.*—"Under heaven!"*

For an instant Serra Longa was struck dumb by this sublime and unexpected reply;—he then continued:

"How would you act, if you had the Legate, the Pope, and all the Cardinals in your power, as they have you, at this moment, in theirs?"

LUTHER.—"I would pay them all respect and honour. But the word of God is with me—above all."

SERRA LONGA, *laughing, and moving one of his fingers backward and forward in a manner peculiar to the Italians.*—"Ha! ha! all proper honour! I do not believe a word of it."

He then left the house, leaped into his saddle, and disappeared.

Serra Longa went no more to Luther; but he long remembered the resistance he had met with from the Reformer, and that which his master was doomed soon after to experience in person. We shall find him again, at a later period, loudly demanding the blood of Luther.

Shortly after Serra Longa had left Luther, the latter received the safe-conduct. His friends had procured it from the Imperial counsellors. It is

* Et ubi manebis? . . . Respondi: Sub Cœlo. (L. Opp. in præf.)

probable that they had consulted the Emperor on the subject, as he was not far from Augsburg. It would even seem, from what the Cardinal afterwards said, that, from a wish to avoid offending him, they had asked his consent to their application; perhaps that may have been the reason why De Vio sounded Luther through Serra Longa; for to oppose openly the giving him a safe-conduct would have discovered intentions that it was wished to conceal. It seemed a safer policy to persuade Luther himself to desist from the demand. But it soon became evident that the Saxon monk was not likely to yield.

Luther was about to appear before the Legate. In requiring a safe-conduct, he did not lean upon an arm of flesh, for he well remembered that the Emperor's safe-conduct had not preserved John Huss from the flames. He only desired to do his duty, by following the advice of his master's friends. The Lord would decide his cause. If God required his life, he was ready joyfully to lay it down. At this solemn moment, he felt the need of once more communicating with his friends, and especially with Melancthon, already so endeared to him; and he availed himself of an interval of leisure to write to him.

"Shew yourself a man," said he, "as you are ready to do. Instruct the youth of our beloved country in what is right and agreeable to the will of God. As for me, I am going to offer up myself for you and for them,* if it be the Lord's will. I

* Ego pro illis et vobis vado immolari. (L. Epp. i. 146.)

prefer death, yea even, what to me would be the greatest misfortune, the loss of your valued society, to retracting what it was my duty to teach, and perhaps ruining by my failure the noble cause to which we are devoted.

"Italy is involved, as Egypt was formerly, in thick darkness, even darkness which may be felt. The whole nation knows nothing of Christ, nor of what pertains to him. And yet they are our lords and masters in the faith and in morals. Thus the wrath of God is fulfilled amongst us; as the prophet says, 'I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.' Do your duty to God, my dear Philip, and avert his wrath by fervent and holy prayer."

The Legate, apprized that Luther would appear the next day before him, called together those in whom he had confidence, both Italians and Germans, that he might concert with them how he ought to treat the German monk. Opinions were divided. One said, "We must compel him to retract." Another, "We must arrest him and throw him into prison." A third was of opinion that it would be better to put him out of the way. A fourth, that it would be expedient rather to win him over by gentleness and mildness. The Cardinal seems to have resolved, in the first instance, to make trial of this last method.*

At length the day of conference arrived.† The Legate, knowing that Luther had declared himself

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 113.

† Tuesday, 11th of October.

willing to retract whatever should be proved contrary to the truth, was sanguine as to the result: he did not doubt that one of his rank and learning would, without much difficulty, reclaim the monk to obedience to the Church.

Luther repaired to the house of the Legate, accompanied by the prior of the Carmelites, his friend and host, by two friars of the convent, by doctor Link, and by an Augustine, probably the same that had accompanied him from Nuremberg. Scarcely had he entered the Legate's palace, when all the Italians, who composed the train of this Prince of the Church, flocked round him, desiring to see the famous Doctor, and pressed him so closely, that he could hardly proceed. On entering the room where the Cardinal was waiting for him, Luther found him accompanied by the apostolical nuncio and Serra Longa. His reception was cool, but civil; and, according to Roman etiquette, Luther, following the instructions of Serra Longa, prostrated himself before the Cardinal; when the latter told him to rise, he knelt; and when the command was repeated, he stood erect. Several of the most distinguished Italians of the Legate's household entered the room, in order to be present at the interview, impatient to see the German monk humble himself before the Pope's representative.

The Legate was silent. He expected, says a contemporary, that Luther would begin his recantation. But Luther waited reverently for the Roman Prince to address him. Finding, however, that he did not open his lips, he understood his silence as

an invitation to open the business, and spoke as follows :—

" Most worthy father, upon the summons of his Holiness the Pope, and at the desire of my gracious Lord, the Elector of Saxony, I appear before you, as a humble and obedient son of the holy Christian church ; and I acknowledge that it was I who published the propositions and theses that are the subject of inquiry. I am ready to listen with all submission to the charges brought against me, and, if I am in error, to be instructed in the truth."

The Cardinal, who had determined to assume the tone of a kind and compassionate father towards an erring child, answered in the most friendly manner, commended Luther's humility, and expressed the joy he felt on beholding it, saying :—" My dear son, you have filled all Germany with commotion by your dispute concerning indulgences. I hear that you are a doctor well skilled in the Scriptures, and that you have many followers. If, therefore, you wish to be a member of the Church, and to have in the Pope a most gracious lord, listen to me."

After this exordium, the Legate did not hesitate to tell him all that he expected of him, so confident was he of his submission : " Here," said he, " are three articles which, acting under the direction of our most holy Father, Pope Leo the Tenth, I am to propose to you :—

" First, you must return to your duty ; you must acknowledge your faults, and retract your errors, your propositions, and sermons. Secondly, you must promise to abstain for the future from propagating

your opinions. And, thirdly, you must engage to be more discreet, and avoid every thing that may grieve or disturb the church."

LUTHER.—"Most worthy father, I request to be permitted to see the Pope's brief, by virtue of which you have received full power to negociate this affair."

Serra Longa and the rest of the Italians of the Cardinal's train were struck with astonishment at such a demand, and although the German monk had already appeared to them a strange phenomenon, they were completely disconcerted at so bold a speech. Christians familiar with the principles of justice desire to see them adhered to in proceedings against others or themselves; but those who are accustomed to act according to their own will are much surprised when required to proceed regularly and agreeably to form and law.

DE VIO.—"Your demand, my son, cannot be complied with. You have to acknowledge your errors; to be careful for the future what you teach; not to return to your vomit; so that you may rest without care and anxiety; and then, acting by the command and on the authority of our most holy father the Pope, I will adjust the whole affair."

LUTHER.—"Deign, then, to inform me wherein I have erred."

At this request, the Italian courtiers, who had expected to see the poor German fall upon his knees and implore mercy, were still more astonished than before. Not one of them would have condescended to answer so impertinent a question.

But De Vio, who thought it scarcely generous to crush this feeble monk by the weight of all his authority, and trusted, moreover, to his own learning for obtaining an easy victory, consented to tell Luther what he was accused of, and even to enter into discussion with him. We must do justice to the general of the Dominicans. It must be acknowledged, that he shewed more equity, a greater sense of propriety, and less irritation, than have subsequently been exhibited in the majority of similar cases. He assumed a tone of condescension, and said:

"My beloved son! there are two propositions put forward by you, which you must, before all, retract: —1st. 'The treasure of indulgences does not consist of the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ:'—2ndly. 'The man who receives the holy sacrament must have faith in the grace offered to him.'"

Both these propositions did indeed strike a death-blow at the commerce of Rome. If the Pope had not power to dispose at will of the Saviour's merits, —if, on receiving the paper in which the brokers of the Church traded, men did not acquire a portion of that infinite righteousness,—this paper currency lost its value, and men would count it no better than a mere rag. And thus also with the sacraments. The indulgences were, in some sense, an extraordinary branch of commerce with Rome; the sacraments made part of her ordinary traffic. The revenue they yielded was by no means small. But to assert that faith was necessary to make them

productive of any real benefit to the soul of the Christian, was to rob them of their attraction in the sight of the people. For faith is not in the Pope's gift; it is beyond his power, and can come from God alone. To declare its necessity was, therefore, to snatch from the hands of Rome both the speculation and the profits attached to it. In assailing these two doctrines, Luther had followed the example of Christ himself. In the very beginning of his ministry, he had overturned the tables of the money-changers, and driven the dealers out of the temple. "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

Cajetan continued: "I will not bring forward the authority of St. Thomas, and the other scholastic doctors, to confute these errors; I will rest entirely on the holy Scriptures, and speak to you in perfect friendship."

Nevertheless, when De Vio proceeded to bring forward his proofs, he departed from the rule he had laid down.* He combated Luther's first proposition by an *Extravagance* or *Constitution*† of Pope Clement; and the second, by all sorts of opinions from the scholastic divines. The discussion turned at its outset upon this constitution of the Pope in favour of indulgences. Luther, indignant at hearing what authority the Legate attributed to a decree of Rome, exclaimed:

"I cannot receive such constitutions as sufficient

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 180.

† This name is given to certain Constitutions of the Popes, collected and appended to the Canon Law.

proofs on subjects so important. For they wrest the holy Scriptures, and never quote them to the purpose."

DE VIO.—"The Pope has authority and power over all things."

LUTHER (*warmly*).—"Save the Scriptures."

DE VIO (*in derision*).—"Save the Scriptures!... Do not you know that the Pope is higher than the Councils, for he has recently condemned and punished the council of Bâle."*

LUTHER.—"But the university of Paris has appealed against his decision."

DE VIO.—"Those gentlemen of Paris will receive their desert."

The Cardinal and Luther then proceeded to discuss the second article, namely, the *faith* that Luther declared to be necessary to render the sacraments efficacious. Luther, pursuing his usual method, quoted, in favour of the opinion that he maintained, several passages of Scripture. But the Legate received them with derision. "It is of faith in general that you are speaking now," said he. "Not so," replied Luther. One of the Italians, the Legate's master of the ceremonies, provoked at Luther's resistance and answers, was burning with desire to speak. He often attempted to interrupt the conversation; but the Legate commanded silence. At last he was obliged to reprove him in so authoritative a tone, that the master of the ceremonies left the room in confusion.†

"As to indulgences," said Luther to the Legate,

* Salva Scripturâ.

† L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 180.

"if you can prove to me that I am mistaken, I am ready to receive instruction. We may leave that subject open, without compromising our faith as Christians. But as to that other article concerning *faith*, if I yielded any thing there, I should be denying Christ. I cannot, therefore, and I will not yield that point, and by God's help I will hold to it to the end."

De Vio *(beginning to lose temper)*.—"Whether you will or will not, you *must* this very day retract that article, or else for that article alone, I will proceed to reject and condemn all your doctrine."

Luther.—"I have no will but the Lord's. He will do with me what seemeth good in his sight. But had I a hundred heads, I would rather lose them all than retract the testimony I have borne to the holy Christian faith."

De Vio.—"I am not come here to argue with you. Retract, or prepare to endure the punishment you have deserved."*

Luther clearly perceived that it was impossible to end the affair by a conference. His adversary was seated before him as though he himself were Pope, and required a humble submission to all that he said to him, whilst he received Luther's answers, even when grounded on the holy Scriptures, with shrugs, and every kind of irony and contempt. He thought the most prudent plan would be to answer the Cardinal in writing. This means, thought he, offered at least one consolation to the oppressed. Others might then give their judgment of the affair;

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 180, 183, 206, &c.

and the unjust adversary, who, by clamour, remained master of the field, might be overawed by the public voice.*

Having, therefore, shewn a disposition to withdraw: "Do you wish," said the Legate to him, "that I should give you a safe-conduct to repair to Rome?"

Nothing would have pleased Cajetan better than the acceptance of this offer. He would thus have got rid of an affair of which he began to perceive the difficulties, and Luther and his heresy would have fallen into the hands of those who would have known how to deal with them. But the Reformer, who was sensible of the dangers that surrounded him even at Augsburg, took care to refuse an offer that would have delivered him up, bound hand and foot, to the vengeance of his enemies. He rejected the proposal as often as De Vio chose to repeat it: which he did several times. The Legate concealed the chagrin he felt at Luther's refusal; he assumed an air of dignity, and dismissed the monk with a compassionate smile, under which he endeavoured to hide his disappointment, and, at the same time, with the politeness of one who hopes to have better success another time.

Hardly had Luther reached the court-yard of the palace, when the loquacious Italian, the master of the ceremonies, whom the Cardinal's reprimands had obliged to leave the hall of audience, delighted at being able to speak to him out of the hearing of Cajetan, and eager to confound the abominable he-

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 209.

retic by his overpowering arguments, ran after him, and, before he came up with him, began to deal out his sophisms. But Luther, disgusted with the man's folly, answered him with one of those sarcastic rebukes which he always had at command, and the master of the ceremonies, quite confounded, turned back and sluuk abashed to the Cardinal's palace.

Luther had not been impressed with a very high opinion of his dignified adversary. He had heard from him, as he afterwards wrote to Spalatan, assertions which were quite contrary to sound theology, and which, in the mouth of another, would have been considered arch-heresies. And yet De Vio was looked upon as the most learned of the Dominicans. Next to him stood Prierias. "We may judge from this," said Luther, "what those must be who fill the tenth or the hundredth rank!"*

On the other hand, the noble firmness of the Doctor of Wittemberg had greatly surprised the Cardinal and all his courtiers. Instead of a poor monk, suing abjectly for pardon, they had beheld a man of independent spirit, an undaunted Christian, an enlightened Doctor, who required them to bring proofs to support their unjust accusations, and courageously defended his own doctrine. The inmates of Cajetan's palace exclaimed with one voice against the pride, obstinacy, and effrontery of the heretic. Luther and De Vio had learned to know one another, and both were preparing themselves for a second interview.

* L. Epp. 1. 173.

A joyful surprise awaited Luther on his return to the convent of the Carmelites. The Vicar-general of the order of the Augustines, his friend, his father, Staupitz, had arrived there. Not having been able to prevent Luther from going to Augsburg, Staupitz gave his friend a new and affecting proof of his attachment, by joining him in that city, with the hope of rendering him some service. This excellent man foresaw that the conference with the Legate would have momentous results. His fears and his friendship for Luther combined to disturb him. It was a balm to the Reformer's heart, after that trying conference, to embrace so precious a friend. He related to him how he had found it impossible to obtain a satisfactory answer, and how he had been required to recant without even an attempt to convict him of error. "You must absolutely," said Staupitz, "answer the Legate in writing."

After what he had heard of this first interview, Staupitz expected no good result from any succeeding one. He therefore determined upon a step which he thought present circumstances made necessary; he decided to release Luther from the obligation of obedience to his order. Staupitz proposed by this means to attain two objects: if, as he could not but forebode, Luther should fail in his undertaking, this proceeding would prevent the disgrace of his condemnation from being reflected on his whole order; and if the Cardinal should enjoin him to oblige Luther to silence or to a recantation, he would have an excuse for noncompliance.* This

* Darinn ihn Dr. Staupitz von dem Kloster-Gehorsam absolvirt. (Math. 15.)

ceremony was gone through in the usual forms. Luther clearly perceived all that it foreboded. His mind was deeply affected by the breaking of ties that he had formed in the enthusiasm of youth. The order he had chosen now rejected him. His natural protectors forsook him. Already he was become a stranger to his brethren. But though his heart was oppressed with sorrow at the thought, he recovered his serenity by looking to the promises of a faithful God, who has said: "I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee."

The Imperial counsellors, having intimated to the Legate, through the Bishop of Trent, that Luther was provided with the Emperor's safe-conduct, at the same time cautioning him against taking any steps against the Reformer's person, De Vio in a violent passion abruptly answered in the true Romish style, "Be it so: but I shall do what the Pope enjoins me."* We know what the Pope's injunctions were.

The next day† both parties prepared for a second interview, which seemed likely to be decisive. Luther's friends, intending to accompany him to the Legate's palace, repaired to the convent of the Carmelites. The Dean of Trent and Peutinger, both Imperial counsellors, and Staupitz, arrived one after the other. Besides these, Luther soon had the pleasure of welcoming the knight Philip von Feilitzsch, and Doctor Ruhel, counsellors of the Elector, who had received orders from their master to be present at the conferences, and to watch over Luther's personal safety. They had arrived at Augs-

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 201. † Wednesday, 12th Oct.

burg on the previous evening. They were commissioned to keep close to him, says Mathesius, as the knight Chlum stood by John Huss, at Constance. The Doctor also took a notary with him, and, accompanied by all his friends, repaired to the Legate's palace.

As they set out Staupitz drew close to Luther; he felt all that his friend would have to endure; he knew that if his eye were not directed towards the Lord, who is the deliverer of his people, he must sink under his trial: "My dear brother," said he, solemnly, "ever bear in mind that you entered on these struggles in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* It was thus that God encompassed his humble servant with consolations and encouragement.

Luther, on arriving at the Cardinal's, found there a new opponent: this was the prior of the Dominicans of Augsburg, who was seated beside his superior. Luther, in conformity with his resolution, had put his answer in writing. The customary salutations being gone through, he read, with a firm voice, the following declaration:

"I declare that I honour the holy Roman Church, and, moreover, that I will continue to do so. I have sought after truth in my public disputations, and what I have taught, I, to this hour, regard as right, true, and christian. Nevertheless I am but a man, and I may be mistaken. I am therefore willing to be instructed and corrected wherever I may have erred. I declare myself ready to answer by word of mouth, or in writing, all objections and

* Seckend. p. 137.

all charges that the illustrious Legate may bring against me. I declare myself willing to submit my theses to the decision of the four universities of Bâle, Fribourg in Brisgau, Louvain, and Paris, and to retract whatever they shall declare to be erroneous. In a word, I am ready to do all that can be required of a christian man. But I solemnly protest against the method that has been pursued in this affair, and against that strange assumption which would oblige me to retract, without having convicted me of error."

Undoubtedly nothing could be more consonant with reason than these proposals of Luther, and they must have greatly embarrassed a judge who had been previously instructed what judgment he was to pronounce. The Legate, who was quite unprepared for this protest, endeavoured to hide his confusion, by affecting a laugh, and putting on the semblance of mildness.

"This protest," he said to Luther with a smile, "is quite unnecessary; I will not dispute with you in public or in private, but my wish is to settle the whole affair with paternal tenderness."

It was the policy of the Cardinal to lay aside the strict forms of justice, which afford protection to the accused, and to treat the matter as an affair of administration, between a superior and his inferior; —a convenient method, as it leaves the fullest scope to the exercise of arbitrary power.

Continuing in the most affectionate tone:—"My dear friend," said De Vio, "I beseech you to abandon this useless design; but rather return to a

* Löscher, ii. 463. L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 181, 209.

sense of duty, acknowledge the truth, and behold me ready to reconcile you to the Church, and to the supreme bishop. . . . Retract, my friend, retract; such is the Pope's will. Whether it be your will or not, matters little; you would find it hard to kick against the pricks. . . ."

Luther, who saw himself already treated as a rebellious child, rejected by the Church, exclaimed: "I cannot retract! but I offer to answer, and in writing. We had enough* of contention—yesterday.

De Vio was provoked at this expression, which reminded him that he had not acted with sufficient discretion; but he recovered himself, and said, smiling:

"Contention! my dear son; I did not contend with you. I am as little inclined as yourself to contention; but to gratify his Highness the Elector Frederic, I am ready to hear you, and exhort you as a friend and a father."

Luther did not understand why the Legate should have taken umbrage at the phrase he had made use of; for, thought he to himself, if I had not wished to be courteous, I should not have said "contend," but "dispute" and "quarrel," for that was what we really did yesterday.

However, De Vio, who felt that, before the respectable witnesses present at the conference, he must at least appear to convince Luther, and endeavour to crush him by argument, reverted to the two propositions which he had pointed out as fundamental errors, fully resolved to allow the Reformer the fewest possible opportunities of reply. Relying

* Digladiatum. (L. Epp. i. p. 181.)

on Italian volubility, he overwhelmed him with objections, without waiting for an answer. Sometimes he sneered, sometimes he chided; he declaimed with passionate energy; he jumbled together the most incongruous things; quoted St. Thomas and Aristotle; exclaimed and raved against all who differed from them; and broke out in invective against Luther. Again and again the latter attempted to reply; but the Legate instantly interrupted him and overwhelmed him with threats. "Recant! recant!" was the burthen of his harangue; he stormed, enacted the dictator, and put down all effort to reply.* Staupitz undertook to stop the Legate. "Deign to allow Doctor Martin time to answer," said he. But the Legate resumed his harangue: he quoted the *extravagances* and the opinions of St. Thomas: he had resolved to have all the talk to himself. Unable to convince, and fearing to strike, he would at least stun by his violence.

Luther and Staupitz clearly perceived that they must not only forego all hope of enlightening De Vio by discussion, but also of making any useful confession of the faith. Luther, therefore, renewed the request he had made at the beginning of the interview, and which the Cardinal had then eluded. And not being permitted to speak, he requested that he might be allowed at least to put his answer in writing and send it to the Legate. Staupitz seconded his request; several of the company present joined in his solicitations; and Cajetan, in spite of his dislike to written documents,—for he

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 181, 209. Decies ferè cœpi ut loquerer, toties rursùs tonabat et solus regnabat.

remembered that such documents are lasting,—at length consented. They separated. The hope which had been conceived that the affair might be terminated at this interview was thus adjourned, and it was necessary to await the result of the ensuing conference.

The permission granted to Luther by the general of the Dominicans to take time for reflection, and to write his answer to the two distinct allegations brought against him relating to the indulgences—and to faith,—was undoubtedly no more than strict justice; and yet we must give De Vio credit for it, as a mark of moderation and impartiality.

Luther left the Cardinal's palace rejoicing that his just request had been granted. In his way to and from the palace, he was the object of general attention. Enlightened men were interested in his cause, as if they themselves were about to stand upon their trial. It was felt that it was the cause of the gospel, of justice, and of liberty, which was then to be pleaded at Augsburg. The lower orders alone sided with Cajetan, and they, doubtless, gave the Reformer significant proofs of their disposition, for he took notice of it.*

It daily became more evident that the Legate would hear nothing from him save the words, "I retract;" and those words Luther was determined not to utter. What issue could be looked for in so unequal a struggle? How could it for a moment be thought that the whole power of Rome, arrayed against one man, could fail in the end to crush him? Luther saw all this; he felt the pressure of

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 186.

that heavy hand under which he had dared to place himself; he despaired of ever returning to Wittemberg, of seeing his dear Philip again, and once more finding himself encircled by those noble youths in whose hearts he so delighted to sow the seeds of everlasting life. He saw the sentence of excommunication suspended over his head, and did not doubt that it would shortly fall upon him.* These forebodings distressed him, but did not cast him down. His trust in God was not shaken. God may, indeed, destroy the instrument he has hitherto made use of; but he will maintain the truth. Whatever may happen, Luther must defend it to the last. With these feelings, therefore, he began to prepare the protest he intended to present to the Legate. It seems he devoted to that purpose a part of the 13th of October.

On the following day, Luther returned to the Cardinal's palace, attended by the counsellors of the Elector. The Italians crowded round him as usual, and a number of them were present at the conference. Luther stepped forward and presented his protest to the Legate. The Cardinal's attendants gazed intently on this writing, in their eyes so daring and presumptuous. The following is the declaration which the Doctor of Wittemberg handed to their master:—†

"You charge me upon two points. And first you bring against me the constitution of Pope Clement VI., in which it is asserted that the treasure of indulgences is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ,

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 185. † Ibid. 187.

and of the saints; an assertion which I deny in my theses.

"Panormitanus," continues he, (applying that designation to Ives, Bishop of Chartres, toward the close of the eleventh century, and author of the famous collection of ecclesiastical law called Panormia)—"Panormitanus in his first book declares, that, in what pertains to our holy faith, not only a General Council, but even a private Christian, is above the Pope, if he can adduce clearer testimony from the Scriptures, and better reasons.* The voice of our Lord Jesus Christ is far above the voice of all men, by whatever names they may be called.

"What most disturbs me and excites my most painful reflections is, that this constitution contains in it many things altogether contrary to the truth. First, it asserts that the *merits* of the saints form a treasury;—whilst the whole volume of Scripture testifies that God rewards us far more richly than we have deserved. The prophet exclaims: 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.'† 'Woe to man,' says St. Augustine, 'however honourable and praise-worthy his life may be, if God were to pronounce a judgment upon him from which mercy should be excluded.'‡

"Thus, then, the saints are not saved by their merits, but solely by the mercy of God, as I have

* Ostendit in materiâ fidei non modò generale concilium esse super papam sed etiam quemlibet fidelium, si melioribus nitatur auctoritate et ratione quam papa. (L. Opp. lat. i. p. 209.)

† Ps. 143. 2. ‡ Confess ix

declared. I maintain this, and I take my stand upon it. The words of holy Scripture, which teach us that the saints have not *merit* enough, ought to be more regarded than those words of men, which affirm that they have merits in superabundance. For the Pope is not above, but under the authority of the word of God."

Luther did not stop there: he shewed that if the indulgences could not consist in the merits of the saints, neither could they consist in the merits of Christ. He proved that the indulgences were barren and unprofitable, since they had no other effect than to excuse men from good works, such as prayer, alms, &c. "No," he exclaimed, "the righteousness of Christ Jesus is not a treasure of indulgences, excusing us from good works, but a treasure of grace *quickening us to perform them.* The righteousness of Christ is applied to the faithful, not by indulgences, not by the keys, but by the Holy Ghost alone, and not by the Pope. If any one holds an opinion resting on better foundations than mine," added he, in concluding what referred to this first point, "let him make it known, and then will I retract."

"I have affirmed," said he, adverting to the second charge, "that no man can be justified before God except by Faith; so that it is necessary that a man should believe with a perfect confidence that he has received pardon. To doubt of this grace is to reject it. The *faith* of the just is his righteousness and his life."*

* Justitia justi et vita ejus, est fides ejus. (L. Opp. lat. i. p. 211.)

Luther supported his proposition by many texts from Scripture.

"Deign, then, to intercede in my behalf with our most holy lord the Pope Leo X., that he may not treat me with so much severity. My soul seeks the light of truth. I am not so proud, nor so set upon vain-glory, that I should be ashamed to retract, if I had taught what is not agreeable to the truth. My greatest joy will be to see the triumph of that doctrine which is according to the mind of God. Only let me not be forced to do any thing that is against my conscience."

The Legate took the declaration which Luther presented, and, after looking it over, said coolly: "You have wasted many words, and written what is little to the purpose: you have replied very foolishly to the two charges brought against you, and you have covered your paper with numerous passages from the holy Scriptures that have no reference whatever to the subject." De Vio then with a contemptuous gesture threw down Luther's protest, as if unworthy of his regard; and, resuming the tone which had in some degree been successful in the last interview, he renewed the cry that Luther must retract. The latter was inflexible. "Brother! brother!" cried De Vio in Italian, "when you were last here you were very docile, but to-day you are altogether intractable." Then the Cardinal began a long speech, borrowed from the writings of St. Thomas; he again extolled with all his might the constitution of Clement VI.; he persisted in maintaining that, in virtue of that constitution, the very merits of Christ are distributed to

the faithful by means of the indulgences: he thought he had silenced Luther. The latter at times attempted to speak; but De Vio scolded and thundered on without intermission, and, as on the previous occasion, claimed the sole right to be heard.

This manner of proceeding had on the first occasion been in some measure successful;—but Luther was not a man to bear with it a second time. His indignation at length broke forth, and it was now his turn to astonish the bystanders, who thought him already conquered by the prelate's volubility. He raised his sonorous voice: he took up the Cardinal's favourite objection, and made him pay dearly for his temerity in entering the lists against him. "Retract! retract!" repeated De Vio, shewing him the constitution of the Pope. "Well!" said Luther, "only prove to me, by this constitution, that the treasure of indulgences is the *very merit* of Christ, and I consent to retract, according to the will and pleasure of your eminence ...."

The Italians, who had not expected this, exulted at his words, and could not repress their joy at seeing the adversary at length taken in the toils. As to the Cardinal, he was like one beside myself; he laughed aloud—but it was an indignant and angry laugh; he stepped forward, took up the volume containing the famous constitution, turned over the leaves, found the passage, and elated with the advantage he thought he had secured, read it aloud with breathless eagerness.* The Italians were now

* Legit fervens et anhelans. (L. Epp. i. p. 145.)

triumphant; the counsellors of the Elector were anxious and embarrassed; Luther waited the right moment. At last, when the Cardinal came to these words, "The Lord Jesus Christ acquired this treasure by his sufferings," Luther interrupted him: "Most worthy father," said he, "deign to consider this passage well, and to meditate upon it carefully: 'He has acquired.'* Christ has acquired a treasure by *his merits;* the merits then are not the treasure; for, to speak with philosophic precision, the cause is a different thing from that which flows from it. The merits of Christ have acquired for the Pope the power of giving such indulgences to the people; but they are not the very merits of the Lord which the Pope distributes. Thus, then, my conclusion is *true*, and this constitution, which you so loudly appeal to, testifies with me to the truth which I declare."

De Vio still held the book in his hand; his eyes still rested on the fatal passage: the inference was unanswerable. Behold him taken in the very net he had spread for another; and Luther, with a strong hand, held him fast, to the utter astonishment of the Italian courtiers who surrounded him. The Legate would have eluded the difficulty; but all retreat was closed. From an early stage of the discussion he had given up the testimony of the Scriptures, and that of the Fathers; and had sheltered himself under this *extravagance* of Clement VI., and now he was taken in his strong hold. Still he was too artful to betray his embarrassment. In order to conceal his

* Acquisivit. (L. Epp. i. p. 145.)

confusion, the Cardinal abruptly changed the subject, and vehemently attacked Luther on other points of difference. Luther, who detected this skilful manœuvre, drew tighter on every side the net in which he had taken his opponent, making it impossible for him to escape: "Most reverend father," said he, in a tone of irony, veiled under the semblance of respect, "your Eminence must not suppose that we Germans are altogether ignorant of grammar: to be a treasure, and to purchase a treasure, are two very different things."

"Retract!" exclaimed De Vio, "retract! or I will send you to Rome, there to appear before the judges commissioned to take cognizance of your cause. I will excommunicate you, and all your partizans, and all who shall at any time countenance you; and will cast them out of the Church. Full power has been given to me for this purpose by the holy apostolic see.* Think you, that your protectors will stop me? Do you imagine that the Pope can fear Germany? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all the princes of Germany put together."†

"Condescend," replied Luther, "to forward the written answer I have given you to Pope Leo X., with my most humble prayers."

The Legate, at these words, glad to have a momentary respite, again assumed an air of dignity, and turning to Luther, said, in a haughty and angry tone:

"Retract, or return nó more!"‡

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 197. † L. Opp. (W.) xxii. 1331.

‡ Revoca aut non revertere. (L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 202.)

The expression struck Luther. He must now answer in another manner than by words. He made an obeisance and withdrew. The counsellors of the Elector followed, and the Cardinal and his Italians, left alone, looked at each other, utterly confounded at such a result of the discussion.

Luther and De Vio never met again: but the Reformer had made a powerful impression on the Legate, which was never entirely effaced. What Luther had said concerning faith, what De Vio read in the subsequent writings of the Doctor of Wittemberg, considerably changed the Cardinal's sentiments. The theologians of Rome saw with surprise and dissatisfaction the opinions touching justification which he brought forward in his commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans. The Reformation did not recede, nor did the Reformer retract; but his judge, who had so repeatedly commanded him to retract, changed his views,—and himself, indirectly, retracted his errors. Thus the unshaken fidelity of the Reformer was crowned with reward.

Luther returned to the monastery where he had been a guest. He had stood firm: he had borne witness to the truth; he had done what it was his duty to do; God would do the rest. His heart overflowed with joy and peace.

However, the tidings that were brought him were not encouraging; a rumour prevailed throughout the city that, if he did not retract, he was to be seized and thrown into a dungeon. The Vicar-general of the order, Staupitz himself,* it was as-

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 210.

serted, had given his consent to this. Luther could not believe that his friend would act in this manner. No! Staupitz could not betray him! As to the designs of the Cardinal, his own words had thrown sufficient light upon them. Yet Luther would not flee from the danger; his life, as well as the truth itself, was in powerful keeping, and, in spite of all these threatenings, he determined not to leave Augsburg.

The Legate soon repented of his violence; he felt that he had forgotten the part it was his policy to play, and wished to resume it. Hardly had Staupitz dined, (for the interview had taken place in the morning,—and dinner was served at noon,) when he received a message from the Cardinal, inviting him to his house. Staupitz repaired thither, accompanied by Wenceslaus Link.* The Vicar-general found the Legate alone with Serra Longa. De Vio immediately advanced towards Staupitz, and addressed him in the gentlest manner:—"Try now," said he, "to prevail upon your monk and induce him to retract. Really, I am pleased with him on the whole, and he has no better friend than myself."†

STAUPITZ.—"I have already done my endeavours, and I will now again advise him humbly to submit to the church."

DE VIO.—"You must give him proper answers to the arguments that he adduces from the Scriptures."

STAUPITZ.—"I must confess, my lord, that *that* is beyond my power; for Doctor Martin is more

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 204.
† Ibid. p. 185.

than a match for me, both in acuteness and in knowledge of the Scriptures."

The Cardinal smiled, we may imagine, at the Vicar-general's frank confession. His own experience, moreover, had taught him the difficulty of convicting Luther of error. He continued, addressing himself to Link as well as to Staupitz:

"Are you aware that, as favourers of heretical doctrine, you are yourselves exposed to the penalties of the church?"

STAUPITZ.—"Deign to resume the conference with Luther, and open a public disputation on the controverted points."

DE VIO, alarmed at the thought of such a measure, exclaimed,—"I will argue no more with the beast. Those eyes of his are too deeply set in his head, and his looks have too much meaning in them."*

Staupitz finally obtained the Cardinal's promise that he would state in writing what he required Luther to retract.

The Vicar-general then returned to Luther. In some degree shaken by the representations of the Cardinal, he endeavoured to lead him to some concession. "Refute then," said Luther, "the Scriptures I have brought forward."—"That is beyond my power," said Staupitz.—"Very well," replied Luther, "my conscience will not allow me to retract, until those passages of Scripture can be shewn to have another meaning. And so," continued he,

* Ego nolo amplius cum hac bestiâ disputare. Habet enim profundos oculos et mirabiles speculationes in capite suo. (Myconius, p. 33.)

"the Cardinal professes his willingness to settle the affair in this way, without subjecting me to disgrace or detriment. Ah! these are fine Italian words, but, in plain German, they mean nothing less than my everlasting shame and ruin. What better can he look for who, from fear of man and against his own conscience, denies the truth?"*

Staupitz desisted; he merely informed Luther that the Cardinal had consented to send him in writing the points on which he required his recantation. He then, doubtless, acquainted him with his intention of leaving Augsburg, where he had now nothing more to do. Luther communicated to him a purpose he had formed for comforting and strengthening their souls. Staupitz promised to return, and they separated for a short time.

Left alone in his cell, Luther's thoughts turned towards the friends most dear to his heart. His thoughts wandered to Weimar and to Wittemberg. He wished to tell the Elector what was passing, and thinking there might be impropriety in addressing the Prince in person, he wrote to Spalatin, and begged the chaplain to let his master know the state of his affairs. He related to him all that had passed, even to the promise the Legate had just made to send a statement of the controverted points in writing. He concluded by saying:† "Thus the matter stands; but I have neither hope nor confidence in the Legate. I am resolved not to retract a single syllable. I shall publish the answer that I have put into his hands, in order that, if he pro-

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 210.
† L. Epp. i. 149.

ceed to violence, he may be covered with shame in the sight of all Christendom."

The Doctor next availed himself of the few moments that were still remaining, to send tidings of himself to his friends at Wittemberg.

"Peace and happiness!" he wrote to Doctor Carlstadt. "Accept these few words in place of a long letter; for time and events are pressing. Another time I hope to write to you and others more fully. For three days my affair has been in hand, and things are at such a point that I have no longer a hope of seeing you again, and have nothing to expect but excommunication. The Legate will not allow me to defend myself, either publicly or in private. His wish, he tells me, is to act the part of a father, not of a judge; and yet he will hear nothing from me but the words: 'I retract, and acknowledge that I have been in error.' And those are words I will not utter!

"The peril in which my cause is placed, is so much the greater, because it is judged not only by implacable enemies, but even by men incapable of understanding its merits. However, the Lord God lives and reigns: to His keeping I commend myself; and I doubt not that in answer to the prayers of pious souls, He will send me deliverance: *I seem to feel that prayer is being made for me!*

"Either I shall return to you unhurt; or else under a sentence of excommunication, I must seek shelter elsewhere.

"Whatever may happen to me, quit yourself manfully; stand fast, and glorify Christ joyfully and without fear. . . .

"The Cardinal always styles me 'his dear son.' I know how little that means. Still I am persuaded I should be to him one of the dearest and most acceptable of men, if I would but pronounce the single word: '*Revoco.*' But I will not become a heretic, by renouncing the faith that has made me a christian. Better far would it be—to be cast out and accursed, and perish at the stake.

"Farewell, my dear Doctor! shew this letter to our theologians,—to Amsdorff, to Philip, to Otten, and to others, in order that you may pray for me, and also for yourselves; for it is your cause also that is now trying. It is the cause of the faith of Jesus Christ, and of the grace of God."*

Sweet thought! which ever fills with consolation and peace the hearts of those who have borne witness to Jesus Christ, to his divinity and grace, when the world rains upon them from all sides its censures, its interdicts, and its scorn! "Our cause is the cause of faith in the Lord." And what sweetness also in the conviction expressed by the Reformer: "*I seem to feel that I am prayed for!*" The Reformation was a work of prayer and of piety toward God. The struggle between Luther and De Vio was, in truth, one of a religious principle, then reappearing in full vigour, with the expiring strength of the disputatious dialectics of the middle age.

Thus did Luther converse with his absent friends. Staupitz soon returned; Doctor Ruhel and the knight Feilitzsch, both of them sent by the Elector, also visited him, after taking leave of the Cardinal. Some other friends of the Gospel joined them; and

* L. Epp. i. 159.

Luther, seeing thus assembled together these noble-minded men, who were soon to be parted from each other, and from whom he himself was about, perhaps, to be for ever separated, proposed that they should join in celebrating the Lord's Supper. The proposal was agreed to; and this little assembly of the faithful partook of the body and blood of Christ. What must have been the feelings of the Reformer's friends at the moment when, as they celebrated with him the Lord's supper, they reflected that this was perhaps the last time that this privilege would be allowed him. What joy and love must have filled the heart of Luther in the consciousness of being so graciously accepted by his Master, at the very moment when men were rejecting him. How solemn must have been that supper! How sacred that evening!*

The next day,† Luther expected to receive the instructions which the Legate was to send to him.

But, not receiving any message from him, he requested his friend Doctor Wenceslaus Link, to wait upon the Cardinal. De Vio received Link most affably, and assured him that he wished to take the most friendly course. "I no longer consider Doctor Martin Luther a heretic," added he; "I will not, at this time, excommunicate him, unless I receive further instructions from Rome: for I have sent his answer to the Pope by an express." Then, to give a proof of his good intentions towards him, he added: "If Doctor Luther would only retract on the subject of indulgences, the business would soon be concluded; for, as to faith in the sacraments,

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. 178. † Sunday, 15th Oct.

that is an article that every one may interpret and understand in his own way." Spalatin, who relates this, adds this sarcastic but just observation: "Whence it is evident, that Rome attaches more importance to money than to our holy faith and the salvation of souls."*

Link returned to Luther. He found Staupitz there, and gave an account of his visit. When he mentioned the unexpected concession of the Legate: "It would have been well," said Staupitz, "if Doctor Wenceslaus had had a notary and witnesses with him, to have taken down that speech in writing; for, if such a proposal were made public, it would do no small prejudice to the cause of these Romans."

However, the more the Roman prelate softened his tone, the more confirmed the honest Germans were in their distrust of him. Several of those trustworthy persons to whom Luther had been recommended held a council together: "The Legate," said they, "is preparing some mischief, through this courier he speaks of, and it is much to be feared that you will all be seized and cast into prison."

Staupitz and Wenceslaus, therefore, determined to leave the town; they embraced Luther, who persisted in remaining at Augsburg, and directed their course by two different roads to Nuremberg, not without many misgivings as to the fate of the magnanimous witness whom they were leaving behind them.

Sunday passed very quietly. Luther waited in vain for a message from the Legate; the latter sent

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 182.

none. He then determined to write to him. Staupitz and Link, before they set out, had begged him to treat the Cardinal with all possible respect. Luther had not yet made trial of Rome and her envoys; it was his first experience. If his humble deference did not succeed he would know what to expect in future. But now, at least, he must make trial of it. As to his own share in the matter, not a day passed in which he did not condemn himself, and mourn over his proneness to use expressions stronger than the occasion required; why should he not confess to the Cardinal what he every day confessed to God? Besides, Luther's heart was easily affected by kindness, and he suspected no evil. He therefore took up his pen, and with a feeling of respectful goodwill, wrote to the Cardinal as follows.*

"My very worthy father in God, I approach you once more, not personally, but by letter, entreating your fatherly kindness graciously to listen to me.

"The reverend Doctor Staupitz, my very dear father in Christ, has advised me to humble myself, to mistrust my own judgment, and to submit my opinion to the judgment of pious and impartial men. He also commended your fatherly kindness, and has fully convinced me of your friendly disposition towards me. This intelligence has filled me with joy.

"Now therefore, most worthy father, I confess, as I have already done before, that I have not shewn, (as they tell me,) sufficient diffidence, gentleness,

* This letter bears date the 17th October.

and respect for the name of the sovereign pontiff; and though my opponents have given me great provocation, I now see that it would have been better to have conducted my cause more meekly, courteously, and reverently, and not to have answered a fool according to his folly, lest I should be like unto him.

"This grieves me very much, and I ask pardon. I will publicly acknowledge it from the pulpit, as indeed I have often done before. I will endeavour, by the grace of God, to speak differently. I will do more: I am ready to promise of my own accord, not again to say a single word on the subject of indulgences, if this business is arranged. But then, let those also who led me to begin it be compelled, on their part, to moderate their discourses, or to be silent.

"So far as the truth of what I have taught is concerned, the authority of St. Thomas and of the other doctors cannot satisfy me. I must hear, (if I am worthy to do so,) the voice of the spouse, which is *the Church*. For it is certain she hears the voice of the bridegroom, Christ.

"I therefore, in all humility and submission, entreat you to refer this matter, hitherto so unsettled, to our most holy lord, Leo X., in order that the Church may decide, pronounce, and ordain, and that those who shall be called on to retract, may do so with a good conscience, or believe in all sincerity."

In reading this letter, another reflection occurs to us. We see that Luther did not act upon a pre-

* L. Opp. (L.) 198.

conceived plan, but solely in obedience to convictions successively impressed upon his mind and heart. Far removed from any settled scheme or preconcerted opposition, he was sometimes, without suspecting it, in contradiction with himself; earlier convictions were still standing in his mind, although their opposites had already found a place there. And yet it is in these characters of truth and sincerity that some have sought for objections to the Reformation; it is because it followed that necessary law of progression, imposed in everything on the human mind, that some have written the history of its *variations;* it is in those very features that mark its sincerity, and make it honourable, that one of eminent genius has seen the most powerful objections against it.* . . . Strange perverseness of the mind of man!

Luther received no answer to his letter. Cajetan, and all his courtiers, after being so violently agitated, had suddenly become motionless. What could be the reason of this? Might it not be that calm which precedes a storm? Some viewed the delay in the light in which Pallavicini has represented it. "The Cardinal was waiting," says he, "till the proud monk, like an inflated bellows, should gradually lose the wind which filled him, and become humble."† Those who thought they better understood the ways of Rome, felt sure that the Legate intended to arrest Luther, but that, not daring to proceed to such extremities on his own authority, on account of the Imperial safe-conduct,

* Bossuet, Hist. des Variations. (Liv. i. p. 25, &c.)

† Ut follis ille ventosa elatione distantus . . . . (p. 40.)

he was awaiting an answer from Rome to his message. Others could not believe that the Cardinal would wait so long. "The Emperor Maximilian," they said, (and in this they might speak the truth,) "will no more scruple to give up Luther for trial by the Church, notwithstanding his safe-conduct, than Sigismund did to surrender Huss to the council of Constance. The Legate is perhaps now in communication with the Emperor. The sanction of Maximilian may every hour be expected. The more opposed he was before to the Pope, the more does he seem to seek to please him; and so it will be till the crown of the empire encircles his grandson's brows." Not a moment was to be lost. "Draw up an appeal to the Pope," said the kind-hearted men who surrounded Luther;—"draw up an appeal to the Pope, and leave Augsburg without delay."

Luther, whose presence in that city had for the last four days been utterly useless, and who had sufficiently proved, by remaining after the departure of the Saxon counsellors sent by the Elector to watch over his safety, that he feared nothing, and was ready to answer for himself, yielded at last to the wishes of his friends. But first he resolved to inform De Vio of his intention; he wrote to him on the Tuesday, the eve of his departure. This letter was in a bolder strain than the former. Seeing his advances were unavailing, Luther seems to erect himself in the consciousness of his right, and of the injustice of his enemies.

"Most worthy father in God," he wrote to De Vio, "your paternal kindness has witnessed, yea,

witnessed and sufficiently acknowledged my obedience. I have undertaken a long journey, in the midst of dangers, in great weakness of body, and notwithstanding my extreme poverty, at the command of our most holy lord, Leo X.;—I have personally appeared before your eminence;—and lastly, I have thrown myself at the feet of his Holiness, and now wait his good pleasure, ready to submit to his judgment, whether he condemn or acquit me. I therefore feel that I have left nothing undone that becomes an obedient son of the Church.

"It is my intention, therefore, not uselessly to prolong my stay here; it is indeed impossible I should do so, as I want the means; and you have positively forbidden my again appearing before you unless I would retract.

"Thus I again set out in the name of the Lord, desiring, if possible, to find some place where I may live in peace. Several persons of more importance than myself have persuaded me to appeal from your paternal kindness, and even from our most holy lord, Leo X., ill-informed, to himself when he shall be better informed on the matter. Though I know that such an appeal will be more agreeable to his highness the Elector than a recantation, yet if it had been my duty only to consult my own feelings, I would not have made it. . . . I have committed no crime:—I ought therefore to have nothing to fear."

Luther having written this letter (which was not delivered to the Legate until after his departure), prepared to leave Augsburg. God had preserved him hitherto, and with all his heart he praised the Lord for his protection. But it was his duty not

to tempt God. He embraced his friends, Peutinger, Langemantel, the Adelmanns, Auerbach, and the Prior of the Carmelites, who had afforded him such christian hospitality. On Wednesday, before day-break, he was up and ready to set out. His friends had advised him to take every possible precaution, fearing, that if his departure were known, it might be opposed. He followed their advice as well as he could. A horse, that Staupitz had left at his disposal, was brought to the door of the convent. Once more he bids adieu to his brethren: he then mounts and sets out, without a bridle for his horse, without boots or spurs, and unarmed. The magistrate of the city had sent him as a guide a horseman, who was well acquainted with the roads. This man conducts him in the dark through the silent streets of Augsburg. They direct their course to a little gate in the wall of the city. One of the counsellors, Langemantel, had ordered that it should be opened to him. He is still in the Legate's power. The hand of Rome is still over him; doubtless, if the Italians knew that their prey was escaping, the cry of pursuit would be raised:—who knows whether the intrepid adversary of Rome may not still be seized and thrown into prison? . . . At last Luther and his guide arrive at the little gate:—they pass through. They are out of Augsburg; and putting their horses into a gallop, they soon leave the city far behind them.

Luther on leaving, had deposited his appeal to the Pope in the hands of the Prior of Pomesaw. His friends advised him not to send it to the Legate. The Prior was commissioned to have it posted, two or three days after the Doctor's departure, on the

door of a cathedral, in the presence of a notary and of witnesses. This was done.

In this writing Luther declared that he appealed from the most holy Father the Pope, ill-informed in this business, to the most holy Lord and Father in Christ, Leo X. by name, by the grace of God, when *better informed*, &c. &c.* The appeal had been drawn up in the regular form, by the assistance of the Imperial notary, Gall de Herbrachtingen, in the presence of two Augustine monks, Bartholomew Utzmair and Wengel Steinbies. It was dated the 16th of October.

When the Cardinal heard of Luther's departure, he was struck with surprise, and, as he affirmed in a letter to the Elector, even with alarm and apprehension. He had, indeed, some reason to be vexed. This departure, which so abruptly terminated his negociations, disconcerted all the hopes which his pride had so long cherished. He had been ambitious of the honour of healing the wounds of the Church, and re-establishing the declining influence of the Pope in Germany; and not only had the heretic escaped with impunity, but without his having so much as humbled him. The conference had served only to exhibit in a strong light, on the one hand, the simplicity, uprightness, and firmness of Luther, and on the other, the imperious and unreasonable procedure of the Pope and his representative. Inasmuch as Rome had gained nothing, she had lost;—and her authority, not having been reinforced, had in reality sustained a fresh check. What will be said of all this at the Va-

* Melius informandum. (L. Opp. lat. i. p. 219.)

tican? what will be the next despatches received from Rome? The difficulties of the Legate's situation will be forgotten, the untoward issue of the affair will be ascribed to his want of skill. Serra Longa and the rest of the Italians were furious on seeing themselves, dextrous as they were, outwitted by a German monk. De Vio could hardly conceal his vexation. Such an insult appeared to call for vengeance, and we shall soon see him give utterance to his anger in a letter to the Elector.

Meanwhile Luther, accompanied by the horseman, continued his journey from Augsburg. He urged his horse and kept the poor animal at full speed. He called to mind the real or supposed flight of John Huss, the manner in which he was overtaken, and the assertion of his adversaries, who affirmed that Huss having, by his flight, annulled the Emperor's safe-conduct, they had a right to condemn him to the flames.* However, these uneasy feelings did not long occupy Luther's mind. Having got clear from the city where he had spent ten days under that terrible hand of Rome which had already crushed so many thousand witnesses for the truth, and shed so much blood,—at large, breathing the open air, traversing the villages and plains, and wonderfully delivered by the arm of the Lord, his whole soul overflowed with praise. He might well say: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are delivered. Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth."† Thus was

* Weissman, Hist. Eccles. i. p. 237.

† Ps. 124.

the heart of Luther filled with joy. But his thoughts again reverted to De Vio: "The Cardinal," thought he, "would have been well pleased to get me into his power and send me to Rome. He is, no doubt, mortified that I have escaped from him. He thought he had me in his clutches at Augsburg. He thought he held me fast; but he was holding an eel by the tail. Shame that these people should set so high a price upon me! They would give many crowns to have me in their power, whilst our Saviour Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver."*

Luther travelled fourteen leagues the first day. In the evening, when he arrived at the inn where he was to spend the night, he was so fatigued—(his horse, says one of his biographers, had a very rough trot),—that, on alighting, he was unable to stand, and dropt motionless upon the straw. He, however, enjoyed some rest. The next day he continued his journey. At Nuremberg he found Staupitz, who was engaged in visiting the convents of his order. It was in this city that he first saw the brief that the Pope had sent to Cajetan concerning him. He was indignant at it, and had he read it before he left Wittemberg, it is very probable he would never have appeared before the Cardinal. "It is impossible to believe," said he, "that any thing so monstrous can have emanated from a Sovereign Pontiff."†

Every where on his journey Luther was an object of general interest. He was returning without

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 202. † L. Epp. i. p. 166.

having given up any thing. Such a victory gained by a mendicant friar over the representatives of Rome, filled every heart with astonishment. It seemed as if Germany had now its revenge for the Italian contempt of Ultramontanes. God's word had obtained more honour than the word of the Pope. That power which for ages had borne rule, had just received a formidable check. The journey of Luther was a triumph. Men rejoiced at the obstinacy of Rome, because it was likely to hasten her ruin. If she had not insisted on retaining her shameful gains,—if she had been prudent enough not to despise the Germans,—if she had reformed flagrant abuses,—perhaps, according to human calculation, things would have returned to the death-like state from which Luther had awakened. But the Papacy would not yield; and the Doctor was to be constrained to bring many other errors to light, and to advance in the knowledge and manifestation of the truth.

On the 26th of October, Luther arrived at Graefenthal, at the extremity of the woods of Thuringia. He there met Count Albert of Mansfeldt, the same person who had so strongly dissuaded him from going to Augsburg. The Count laughed heartily at his strange equipment. He compelled him to stop, and obliged him to become his guest: Luther soon afterwards continued his journey.

He hastened on, desiring to be at Wittemberg on the 31st of October, in the expectation that the Elector would be there at the feast of All Saints, and that he might have an interview with him. The brief which he had read at Nuremberg had

revealed to him all the danger of his situation. In fact, being already condemned at Rome, he could not hope either to continue at Wittemberg, or to find an asylum in a convent, or to dwell anywhere in peace and safety. The protection of the Elector might, perhaps, avail him; but he was far from being sure of it. He had nothing more to hope from the true friends he had hitherto poesessed at this prince's court. Staupitz, having lost the favour he had long enjoyed, was then leaving Saxony. Spalatin, though beloved by Frederic, had not much influence over him. The Elector himself was not sufficiently instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel to expose himself for the sake of it to manifest dangers. However, Luther thought he could not do better than return to Wittemberg, and there wait to see what the eternal and merciful God would do with him. If, as some expected, he were unmolested, he resolved to devote himself entirely to study and to the instruction of youth.*

Luther got back to Wittemberg on the 30th of October. His haste had been in vain. Neither the Elector nor Spalatin had come to the feast. His friends were delighted to see him again amongst them. He hastened to inform Spalatin of his arrival. "I have arrived to-day at Wittemberg, safe and sound, through God's mercy," said he; "but how long I shall stay here I know not . . . . I am filled with joy and peace; and find it hard to conceive how the trial I am enduring can appear so grievous to so many distinguished men."

De Vio had not waited long, after the departure

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 183.

of Luther, to pour forth all his indignation to the Elector. His letter breathed vengeance.

He gave Frederic an account of the conference, with an air of self-satisfaction:—"Since brother Martin," said he in conclusion, "cannot be brought by paternal measures to acknowledge his error, and to continue faithful to the Catholic Church, I request your Highness to send him to Rome, or to banish him from your territories. Be assured that this complicated evil-intentioned and mischievous affair cannot be long protracted; for as soon as I shall have informed our most holy lord of all this artifice and malice, he will bring it to a speedy end." In a postscript, written with his own hand, the Cardinal entreated the Elector not to tarnish with shame his own honour and that of his illustrious ancestors, for the cause of a contemptible monk.*

Never was the soul of Luther roused to higher indignation than when he read the copy of this letter which the Elector sent him. The sense of the sufferings he was destined to endure, the value of the truth for which he contended, contempt for the conduct of the Roman Legate, together swelled his heart. His answer, written at the moment when his whole soul was thus agitated, is distinguished by that courage, elevation, and faith, which he ever displayed in the most trying circumstances of his life. He gave, in his turn, an account of the conference at Augsburg. He described the deportment of the Cardinal; and thus proceeded:

* L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 203.

"I would like to answer the Legate, putting myself in the place of the Elector.

"'Prove to me that you understand what you talk about,' I would say to him; 'let the whole discussion be carried on in writing. I will then send brother Martin to Rome, or else I will apprehend him and have him put to death. I will take care of my own conscience and honour, and I will not allow my glory to be sullied. But as long as your absolute knowledge shuns the light, and only discovers itself by clamour, I cannot put faith in darkness.'

"This, most excellent Prince, is the answer I would make him.

"Let the reverend Legate, or the Pope himself, specify my errors in writing: let them bring forward their reasons; let them instruct me, who desire to be instructed, who ask to be so, who intend what I say, and long for instruction, so that even a Turk would not refuse to satisfy me. If I do not retract and condemn myself, when they have proved to me that the passages of Scripture that I have quoted ought to be understood in a different sense from that in which I have understood them,—then, O most excellent Elector! let your Highness be the first to prosecute and expel me, let the university reject me and overwhelm me with indignation. I will go further, and I call heaven and earth to witness, let the Lord Christ Jesus himself reject and condemn me! These are not words of vain presumption, but of firm conviction. Let the Lord deprive me of his grace, and every creature of God refuse to countenance me, if, when I have been shewn a better doctrine, I do not embrace it.

"But if, on account of my low estate, and because I am but a poor mendicant brother, they despise me, and so refuse to instruct me in the way of truth, let your Highness beg the Legate to inform you in writing wherein I have erred; and if they refuse this favour to your Highness yourself, let them write their own views, either to his Imperial Majesty, or to some German Archbishop. What ought I to do—what can I do—more?

"Let your Highness listen to the voice of your conscience and of your honour, and not send me to Rome. No man has the right to require this of you; for it is impossible that I should be safe in Rome. The Pope himself is not safe there. It would be enjoining you to betray Christian blood. They have there paper, pens, and ink; they have also numberless notaries. It is easy for them to write wherein and wherefore I have erred. It will cost them less trouble to instruct me at a distance by writing, than, having me among them, to put me to death by stratagem.

"I resign myself to banishment. My adversaries lay snares for me on all sides; so that I can nowhere live in safety. That no harm may happen to you on my account, I leave your territories, in God's name. I will go wherever the eternal and merciful God will have me. Let him do with me what seemeth him good.

"Thus, then, most serene Elector, I reverently bid you farewell. I commend you to Almighty God, and I give you endless thanks for all your kindness to me. Whatever be the people among whom I may hereafter live, wherever my future lot may

be cast, I shall ever remember you, and shall gratefully pray, without ceasing, for the happiness of you and yours.*

"I am still, thanks to God, full of joy, and praise him that Christ, the Son of God, counts me worthy to suffer in so holy a cause. May He for ever preserve your illustrious Highness. Amen."

This letter, so overflowing with the accents of truth and justice, made a deep impression on the Elector. "He was shaken by a very eloquent letter," says Maimbourg. Never could he have had the thought of giving up an innocent man to the power of Rome. Perhaps he might have persuaded Luther to conceal himself for some time. But he resolved not even in appearance to yield in any way to the Legate's threats. He wrote to his counsellor, Pfeffinger, who was then at the court of the Emperor, to represent to his Majesty the real state of affairs, and to beg him to write to Rome, so that the matter might be brought to a conclusion, or at least be determined in Germany by impartial judges.†

Some days after, the Elector wrote to the Legate in reply: "Since Doctor Martin has appeared before you at Augsburg, you ought to be satisfied. We did not expect that, without convincing him of error you would claim to oblige him to retract. Not one of the learned men in our states has intimated to us an opinion that Martin's doctrine is impious, antichristian, or heretical." The Prince, in the latter

* Ego enim ubicumque ero gentium, illustrissimæ Dominationis tuæ nunquam non ero memor. (L. Epp. i. 187.)

† L. Opp. (L.) xvii. p. 244.

part of his letter, declined sending Luther to Rome, or expelling him from his territories.

This letter, which was communicated to Luther, rejoiced his heart. "Gracious God!" he wrote to Spalatin, "with what joy I read and re-read it; for I know what confidence I may repose in these words, at once so forcible and so discreet. I fear the Italians will not understand their full import. But they will at least comprehend that what they believed already finished is scarcely yet begun. Be pleased to present my grateful acknowledgments to the Prince. It is strange that he (De Vio) who, a little while ago, was a mendicant friar like myself, is not afraid to address the most powerful princes with disrespect, to call them to account, to threaten and command them, and treat them with such preposterous haughtiness. Let him learn that the temporal power is ordained of God, and that none are permitted to trample its glory under foot."*

One thing that had undoubtedly encouraged Frederic to answer the Legate in a tone which the latter did not expect, was a letter addressed to him by the university of Wittemberg. It was not without reason that they declared themselves in the Doctor's favour. The university was increasing in reputation, and surpassed all the other schools. A crowd of students flocked thither from all parts of Germany to listen to this extraordinay man, whose instructions seemed to open a new era to religion and learning. These young men, who arrived from the different provinces, would often stop when they discovered in the distance the steeples of Wittem-

* L. Epp. i. p. 198.

berg; and, raising their hands towards heaven, bless God for having caused the light of truth to shine forth from Wittemberg, as in former ages from Mount Sion, that it might penetrate to the most distant lands.* A life and activity, hitherto unknown, was infused into the university studies.—"Our young men are as diligent here as ants upon an ant-hill,"† wrote Luther.

Thinking that he might soon be driven out of Germany, Luther busied himself in publishing a report of the conference at Augsburg. He resolved that it should be preserved as a memorial of the struggle between Rome and himself. He saw the storm ready to burst, but he did not fear it. He was in daily expectation of the maledictions of Rome. He arranged and regulated every thing that he might be ready when they arrived. "Having tucked up my gown and girded my loins," said he, "I am ready to depart like Abraham, not knowing whither I go; or rather well knowing whither, since God is every where."‡ He intended to leave behind him a farewell letter. "Take courage then," he wrote to Spalatin; "to read the letter of a man accursed and excommunicated."

His friends were full of fears and anxiety on his account. They entreated him to deliver himself up as a prisoner into the Elector's hands, that that prince might keep him somewhere in safety.§

* Scultet. Annal. i. p. 17.

† Studium nostrum more formicarum fervet. (L. Opp. i. p. 193.)

‡ Quia Deus ubique. (L. Opp. i. p. 188.)

§ Ut principi me in captivitatem darem. (L. Epp. i. p. 189.)

His enemies could not comprehend the grounds of his confidence. One day, at the court of the Bishop of Brandenburg, the conversation turned on the Reformer, and it was asked on what support he could be depending. Some said, "It is on Erasmus and Capito and other learned men that he reckons for protection."—"No, no!" replied the Bishop; "the Pope would care very little for those gentry. It is to the university of Wittemberg and the Duke of Saxony that he looks for support." .... Thus both parties were ignorant of that strong tower in which the Reformer had sought refuge.

Thoughts of taking his departure were passing through Luther's mind. It was not the fear of danger that gave rise to them, but the presentiment of the incessantly renewed opposition he should find in Germany to the open profession of the truth. "If I stay here," said he, "I shall be denied the liberty of speaking and writing many things. If I depart, I will pour forth freely the thoughts of my heart, and devote my life to Christ."*

France was the country where Luther hoped he might without hindrance proclaim the truth. The liberty enjoyed by the doctors of the university of Paris appeared to him worthy of envy. Besides, he, on many points, agreed in the opinions that prevailed there. What might have ensued, if Luther had been removed from Wittemberg to France? Would the Reformation have established itself there as it did in Germany? Would the power of Rome have been dethroned there; and France, which was

* Si iero, totum effundam, et vitam offeram Christo. (L. Epp. i. p. 190.)

destined to endure a long struggle between the hierarchical principles of Rome and the ruinous principles of an irreligious philosophy, have become the great dispenser of evangelical light? It is useless to indulge in vain conjectures. But, certainly, Luther at Paris would have made a great difference in the fortunes of the Church and of France.

The soul of Luther was deeply moved. He often preached in the church of the city, supplying the place of Simon Heyns Pontanus, the pastor of Wittemberg, who was frequently indisposed. He thought it right, at all hazards, to take leave of the congregation to whom he had so often preached the doctrine of salvation. "I am a very unstable preacher," said he one day in the pulpit, "and very uncertain in my position. How often have I left you suddenly without taking leave of you. If this should happen again, and I should never return, receive my last farewell." Then, having added a few words, he concluded by saying with moderation and gentleness: "Finally, I warn you not to be terrified, if the Papal censures should be discharged against me in all their fury. Do not blame the Pope, nor bear any ill-will to him, or to any man living, but leave the whole matter to God."

At length, the moment of his departure seemed at hand. The Prince gave him to understand that he wished him to leave Wittemberg. The wishes of the Elector were too sacred with Luther for him not to hasten to comply with them. The Reformer

* Deo rem committerent. (Luth. Epp. i. p. 191.)

prepared to depart, without knowing well to what quarter to direct his steps. Resolving, however, once more to see his friends about him, he invited them to a farewell repast. Seated with them at table, he once more enjoyed their conversation and their affectionate and anxious friendship. A letter was brought to him. It came from the court. He opened and read it. His heart sank within him. It enclosed an order for his departure. The Prince inquired: "Why he delayed so long?" His soul was overwhelmed with dejection. However, he resumed courage; and, raising his head, said firmly and joyfully, turning to those about him: "Father and mother forsake me, but the Lord will take me up."* Depart then he must. His friends were much affected. What would become of him? If Luther's protector rejects him, who will receive him? And this Gospel, this word of truth, and this admirable work he had taken in hand, will, doubtless, perish with the faithful witness. The fate of the Reformation seemed suspended by a single thread; and would not the moment in which Luther left the walls of Wittemberg break that thread? Luther and his friends said little. Sympathising in his feelings, they gave vent to their tears. However, but a short time had elapsed, when a second messenger arrived. Luther opened the letter, expecting to find a reiterated order for his departure. But, lo! the mighty power of the Lord! for the present he is saved. Every thing is changed. "As the Pope's new envoy," said the letter, "hopes that everything may be settled by a

* Vater und mutter verlassen mich, aber der Herr nimmt mich auf.

conference, remain for the present."* How important was this hour! and what might have happened if Luther, ever anxious to obey the Prince's pleasure, had left Wittemberg immediately on the receipt of the first letter! Never had Luther and the cause of the Reformation been brought lower than at this moment. It might have been thought that their fate was decided: in an instant it was changed. Having reached the lowest step in his career, the Reformer rapidly arose, and from that time his influence continued to ascend. "At the word of the Lord," in the language of the prophet, "his servants go down to the depths, and mount up again to heaven."

Spalatin, by Frederic's orders, sent for Luther to Lichtemberg, to have an interview with him. They had a long conversation on the state of affairs. "If the Pope's sentence of condemnation come, I certainly cannot remain at Wittemberg," said Luther. "Beware," replied Spalatin, "of being in too great a hurry to go to France."† He left him, telling him to wait further tidings from him. "Only commend my soul to Christ," said Luther to his friends. "I see that my adversaries are more and more determined on my destruction. But Christ is meanwhile strengthening me in my determination not to give way."‡

Luther at that time published his report of the conference at Augsburg. Spalatin had written to him from the Elector to abstain from doing so; but

* L. Opp. xv. 824.

† Ne tam citò in Galliam irem. (L. Epp. i. p. 195.)

‡ Firmat Christus propositum non cedendi in me. (Ibid.)

it was too late. When the publication had taken place, the Prince gave his sanction. "Great God!" said Luther in his preface, "what a new, what an amazing crime, to seek after light and truth, and above all in the Church, that is to say, in the kingdom of the truth!" "I send you this document," said he, writing to Link: "it cuts too deep, no doubt, to please the Legate; but my pen is ready to give out much greater things. I myself know not whence these thoughts come to me. As far as I can see, the work is not yet begun;* so little reason is there for the great men of Rome hoping to see an end of it. I shall send you what I have written, in order that you may judge if I am right in believing that the Antichrist of whom St. Paul speaks, now reigns in the court of Rome. I think I can prove that now-a-days the power that presides there is worse than the Turks themselves."

On all sides, sinister reports reached Luther. One of his friends wrote him word, that the new envoy from Rome had received orders to apprehend him and deliver him up to the Pope. Another reported that, as he was travelling, he had met with a courtier, and that, the conversation having turned upon the affairs which were then the general topic in Germany, the latter confided to him that he had undertaken to seize and deliver Luther into the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff. "But the more their fury and violence increase," wrote Luther, "the less do I fear them."†

* Res ista necdum habet initium suum, meo judicio. (L. Epp. i. p. 193.)

† Quò illi magis furunt et vi affectant viam, eò minus ego terreor. (L. Epp. i. p. 191.)

Cajetan's ill success had occasioned much dissatisfaction at Rome. The vexation felt at the failure of the affair, fell in the first instance upon him. All the Roman courtiers thought they had cause to reproach him for having been deficient in the prudence and address which, in their account, were the most indispensable qualifications in a legate, and for not having relaxed the strictness of his scholastic theology on so important an occasion. "The failure is entirely owing to him," said they. "His awkward pedantry has spoiled all. Why did he provoke Luther by insults and threats, instead of alluring him by the promise of a bishopric, or even, if necessary, a cardinal's hat?"* These mercenaries judged of the Reformer by themselves. The failure, however, must be retrieved. On the one hand, it was requisite that Rome should declare herself; on the other, she must not offend the Elector, who might be very serviceable to her in the anticipated event of the election of an Emperor. As it was impossible for Roman ecclesiastics to form a notion of the true source whence Luther derived his strength and courage, they imagined that the Elector was much more deeply implicated in the matter than he really was. The Pope resolved, therefore, to pursue a different line of policy. He caused to be published in Germany, by his Legate, a bull, wherein he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences precisely in those points which had been questioned, but making no mention either of the Elector or of Luther. As the Reformer had

* Sarpi, Concile de Trente, p. 8.

always declared, that he would submit to the decision of the Romish Church, he must now, as the Pope thought, either keep his word, or openly shew himself to be a disturber of the peace of the Church, and a despiser of the holy apostolic see. In either case, the Pope, it was thought, must be a gainer. But nothing is ever gained by so obstinate a resistance against the truth. In vain had the Pope threatened with excommunication whosoever should teach otherwise than he ordained; the light is not arrested by such orders. It would have been wiser to moderate, by certain restrictions, the pretensions of the sellers of indulgences. Apparently, this decree of Rome was a further act of impolicy. By legalizing the most flagrant abuses, it irritated all sensible men, and rendered impossible the return of Luther to his allegiance to the Church. "It was commonly thought," says a Catholic historian,* and a great enemy to the Reformation, "that this bull had been framed only for the gain of the Pope and of the mendicant friars, who began to find that no one would give any thing for their indulgences."

The Cardinal De Vio published this decree at Lintz, in Austria, on the 13th of December, 1518; but Luther had already taken his stand in a position of security. On the 28th of November he had appealed, in the chapel of Corpus Christi at Wittemberg, from the Pope to a General Council of the Church. He foresaw the storm that was about to burst upon him, and he knew that God only could avert it. But there was something he himself was

* Maimbourg.

called to do;—and he did it. He must, no doubt, leave Wittemberg, if it were only for the sake of the Elector, as soon as the maledictions of Rome should arrive there; yet he resolved not to quit Saxony and Germany without a public protest. He, therefore, drew up his appeal; "and that it might be ready to be distributed as soon as the furies of Rome should overtake him," as he says, he had it printed, under the express condition that the bookseller should deposit with him all the copies. But this man, from desire of gain, sold almost the whole impression, whilst Luther was quietly expecting to receive them. He was much annoyed, but the thing was done. This bold appeal was dispersed far and wide. In it Luther again protested that he had no intention of saying any thing against the holy Church, or the authority of the Apostolic see, and the Pope *duly informed.* "But," continued he, "seeing that the Pope, who is God's vicar upon earth, may, like any other man, fall into error, commit sin, and utter falsehood, and that the appeal to a General Council is the only safeguard against acts of injustice which it is impossible to resist,—on these grounds I find myself obliged to have recourse to it."*

Behold, then, the Reformation launched upon a new career. It is no longer to depend upon the Pope and his decrees, but upon a General Council. Luther speaks to the Church at large, and the voice which proceeds from the chapel of Corpus Christi

* Löscher, Ref. Act.

is to make itself heard in all the gatherings of the Lord's flock. It is not in courage that the Reformer is wanting. Behold him giving new proof of it. Will God be wanting to him? The answer will be read in the different phases of the Reformation which are still to pass before us.

END OF VOL. I.



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